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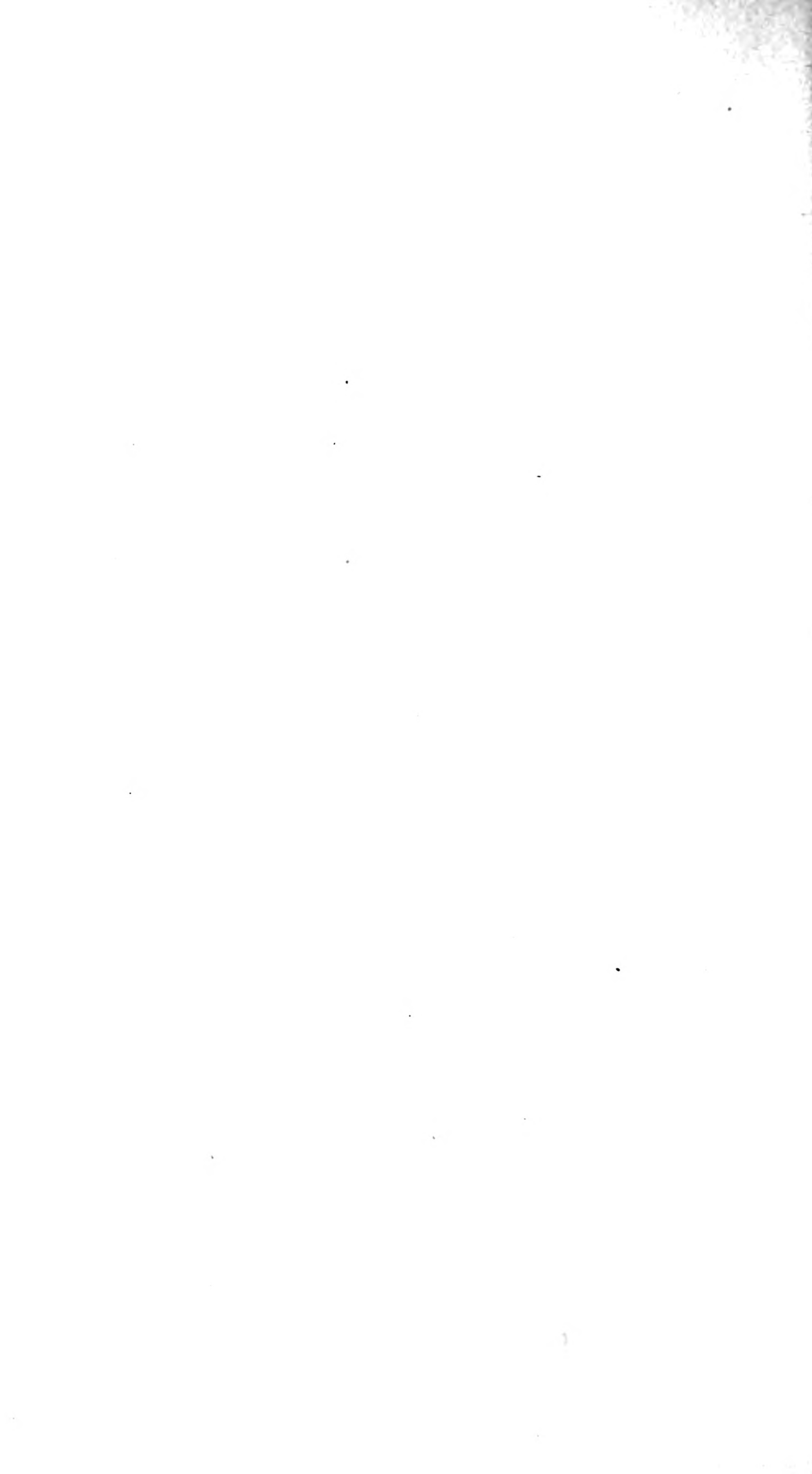
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COMPTON AUDLEY.

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VOL. III.



LONDON :  
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,  
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

# COMPTON AUDLEY;

OR,

HANDS NOT HEARTS.

BY LORD WILLIAM LENNOX.

The hands of old gave hearts;  
But our new heraldry is — hands not hearts.

SHAKSPEARE.

Un tel hymen est l'enfer de ce monde.

VOLTAIRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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1841.



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# COMPTON AUDLEY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THEATRE AT Highbury Cross.

“All the world’s a stage.”

“The play’s the thing.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“Like wandering Arabs, shift from place to place  
The strolling tribe.

\* \* \* \* \*  
And fawning cringe, for wretched means of life,  
To Madam Mayoress or his Worship’s wife.”

CHURCHILL.

A PETITION from Mr. Beverly Gagen was presented one morning to Lord Atherley, requesting his patronage at the theatre, Highbury Cross, the post-town; or begging he might be allowed to give “a taste of his quality” before the distinguished party assem-

bled at Compton Audley. Lord Atherley assented to the former, and the night arrived in due time.

The party from Compton Audley entered the theatre a few minutes before seven, and were received at the box entrance, which diverged and dived to the left to the pit, and up, on to the right, through a slim side door, to the gallery, by Mr. Beverly Gagen, the manager, in a light comedy dress, with two flaring "*fours*," stuck in a pair of white and gold stage candlesticks. Mrs. Beverly Gagen was ensconced in a small pigeon-hole sort of a box, a species of pillory on a pivot, or not unlike one of the wickets at an *hôpital des enfans trouvés* in France, ornamented on this occasion with artificial flowers and laurel leaves, and which, by the contrivance we have mentioned, enabled the manageress to take the money and tickets for boxes, pit, and gallery. According to the necessity, as the yachters say, "'bout she goes!"



As Lady Atherley's party entered the stage box, which was gaudily decorated with theatrical flags and banners, festooned scrolls bearing the usual melo-dramatic sentiments, "He dies by sunrise!" "Spolatro is the murderer!!!" and which the scene-painter, Mr. Smears, had in vain attempted to hide,—the band struck up "Rule Britannia," accompanied by the discord arising from a noisy gallery, the opening and shutting of the box-doors, and the vociferating voices of the manageress and the box-keeper, announcing the names of first and second company coming to their places. A theatre, like Grizzle's love, levels all distinctions,—

"Lords down to cellars bears,  
And bids the brawny porter walk up stairs!"

or, according to Churchill,

"To clap or hiss all have an equal claim ;  
The cobbler and his lordship's right the same."

Some time elapsed before the curtain was

drawn up, during which the orchestra, (two fiddles, a flageolet, and a triangle,) played an overture, two symphonies, and a couple of country-dances, which were nearly drowned by the loud confusion of voices, of all tones and in all keys. "Nosey! why don't you give your *ducks* a swim?" this was addressed to the leader of the band, who appeared in a pair of somewhat soiled white duck trowsers. "Smith! where *are* you?" "Jerry,—Jem! here, come up! Lots of room! Where's Sarah?" "Porter, ale, or cider, ladies *and* gentlemen! Choice fruit and bill of the play," accompanied by the uproar of *cat-calling*, stamping, shouting, and hissing from the gallery. It was almost a London gallery.

At last the bell rang; up went the curtain; and the "new and romantic drama, of peculiar interest, entitled, *Maldavina, the Bandit's Bride, or Murder, Mystery, and Madness!!!*" commenced. Three banditti were discovered, plotting treason against their captain, the music

playing an accompaniment to the melo-dramatic action ; three sets of black snake curls all going at once !—Maldavina, the Bride, appeared on the rock, and, on seeing them, hides behind it. Sanguino, Carnagio, and Rapino make signs of defiance, draw their daggers, kneel, chorus oaths, and retire. Soft music,—and the heroine, crossing and recrossing rocks (made of slanting planks on barrels) to and fro, from the back of the stage advanced to the front. Before she had repeated the first line,

“The moon is up ; it is the dawn of night—  
Ye stars, how bright ye shine !”

Miss Fitz-Annandale, (so the lady was called in *the* white satin playbill, trimmed with pink,) looked towards the stage box, exclaimed “Mr. Ravensworth ! ’tis he !” clasped her hands, beat her forehead, uttered a shriek, and fell, apparently lifeless, upon the stage.

“Brayvo !” cried a dozen voices from the gallery. . “H’encore !”

Dudley thought he recognised the voice,—

the form,—his suspicions were correct ; Miss Adeliza Euphemia Buffy was the Fitz-Annan-dale Maldavina !

The curtain was lowered, the “kind indulgence of a liberal public” was claimed for a few moments, during which period we will attempt the life of the fair heroine. Our readers will remember Miss Buffy of Eel-pie House memory ; her story is soon told.

Miss Buffy, after considerable trouble, had prevailed upon her mamma to join a party to that east end of heaven upon earth, Margate ! The party consisted of Mère and Mademoiselle Buffy, Mr. and Mrs. Deputy Pewtress, pawnbroker, of Poppin’s Court, Farringdon Without, and their seven pledges. The deputy was a retailer of witticisms and money. He remarked, “that the only way to *preserve* the young Pewtresses was to *pickle* them annually in the *briny* ocean !” a joke which he had used repeatedly, with unabated success. The morning, the happy morning arrived, when

a regular, ponderous, rickety hackney-coach, of the old school, and a small taxed cart, of no school at all, and which on ordinary occasions carried out the goods to auctioneers, laden inside and out, drove up to the London Bridge Wharf. Out of them stepped the above-mentioned party attended by two maids of all work, with a most astounding number of packages. After some little time, occupied in wrangling with the coachman and watermen, the families, with their luggage, including trunks, work-boxes, bonnet-boxes, hat-boxes, parasols, umbrellas, and guitar-case, were safely stowed on board the steamer.

The bell rang; the scene was one of bustle and confusion—porters hurrying, passengers shouting. The bell ceased; the boat started.

No adventure of any importance occurred during the voyage, save the marked attentions of a mysterious Werter-looking man, enveloped in a military cloak, with military spurs, black ringlets, and huge eyes, to Miss Buffy. It is



true, he never spoke, but he was ever present to assist her into the boat, to get her a seat, to fetch her parasol, to arrange her campstool, and to perform a thousand other *petits soins*.

After a most propitious voyage the good steamer "Magnet" reached its destination; and the mysterious gentleman took off his hat, offered his hand to Miss Buffy, pumped up a sigh, and in a tone "most musical, most melancholy" whispered,—

"Sorceress, thou hast bewitched the soul of Edgar! May those eyes, which have proved so fatal to his peace one day beam upon him with the smile of satisfaction, and raise him from the misery love has plunged him in!"

The lady blushed and held down her head. Edgar, the mysterious, pressed her arm, pumped up another sigh, and vanished.

Fortunately for Miss Buffy, this scene had passed unnoticed by the remainder of the party, who were busily occupied in landing

their luggage. At least fifty cards were placed in Mrs. Deputy Pewtress's hands, of hotels and lodgings with sea-views. One attracted the deputy's attention :—"BALLS, pawnbroker, silversmith, &c., Prospect House, Arabella Crescent. Private house. Lodgings to let with a sea-view,"—for he always had an eye to business, and differed with the proverb "that two of a trade can never agree," that is—when a distance of sixty miles separates them.

"That name reminds me, said Mrs. Pewtress, of that excellent epigram of Hook's.—

"It seems as if nature had curiously planned  
That men's names with their trades should agree :  
There 's Twining, the tea-man, who lives in the Strand,  
Would be *wining* if robbed of his *T*."

"Come along, my dear," said Mrs. Deputy, but her better half would have his saying out.

"'BALLS, pawnbroker, silversmith, &c.'—ah ! that's good, nearly as good as Giblett, poulterer ; Alehouse, publican ; Truefit, wigmaker ;

Sweet, grocer;" mentioning a dozen other names and trades equally applicable, which existed in those days as in ours.

A truck was procured, and a little ragged boy (for the consideration of twopence), consented to conduct the party to Mr. Balls. Arabella Crescent, named after the *sposa* of the treble golden man, consisted of about half a dozen houses, decorated with shiny flint fronts, as if children's shoes of patent leather were fancifully introduced, with huge bay-windows and green doors, and brass-plates and knockers, and a small strip of thin garden, ornamented with a pump, and two poplars in a dark green consumption. There once might have been a sea-view, but the mania for building had been so great, that every bricklayer or plasterer who could scrape together funds to commence building, at once ycleped himself "architect and builder," and ran up single brick structures, mortgaging each story for fresh funds, and tiling in the garrets with

the equitable loan raised on the second floor. Such was the case of "Hodsoll's-row," the name of some four unfinished affectations of houses, named after the architect, and which faced Arabella Crescent.

"Any children, Mrs. Balls?"

"Two boys and a girl," responded the Margate pawnbroker's wife.

"What, three golden balls!" exclaimed Mr. Pewtress.

Mrs. Balls did not take the joke.

"Sad thing, Mrs. Balls, that row of houses," said Mr. Deputy Pewtress.

"Why, yes," replied Mrs. Balls, "but there's a charming view from the attics, and some people get weary of a constant sea-view."

"That reminds me, Mrs. Balls, of a story that once happened to me," said the Deputy. "A fellow had the impudence to build a dead-wall up between my back windows in Cripple-gate, and a charming view we had of the church-yard with a lime-tree. 'You've spoiled

my *prospect*,' said I. 'That's your *look out*,' said he. "Good, —warn't it, eh?"

Though the silversmith's wife was not aware of the joke,—seeing the deputy laughed, she herself laughed too; and so pleased the worthy money-lender, that he at once agreed to take the lodgings for one month certain.

We will not stop to detail the *ménage* or amusements of the party in Arabella Crescent, who devoted their time (as is the custom at watering-places), to donkey-riding, stale novel-reading, picking up shells and sea-weed, writing names on the sands, visiting the libraries, patronizing the shilling loo tables, taking with emphasis 2 out of 2, 3, 5, the *last* remaining *chances*.

On the third morning our heroine Adeliza, while taking a stroll in the garden (a telescope in one hand and a well-thumbed romance in the other, 'Waldemar, or the Wizard of Wallachia'), was agreeably surprised by the appearance of a stranger. She hastily closed her book,



looked, and discovered (extempore) the mysterious Edgar. He was standing with his arms folded, in the same cloak, repeating some lines to himself, and occasionally referring to a small manuscript. "How like Waldemar!" said Addy to herself, comparing the *real* with the *ideal* hero of her book. At that moment a damsel, with fat arms and red elbows, bellowed out——

"Please, Miss, breakfast is ready, and Mrs. Buffy says the tea will be spile't."

Miss Buffy waved her hand to Edgar, and looked unutterable things; that is, she stared and said nothing. Edgar threw his mantle in a Coriolanus fashion over his left arm,—drew a note from his pocket,—held it up,—kissed it in the way they stamp a penny-post letter, and deposited it under a brick in the open and unfinished window of one of the Hodsoll-row houses; then pressing his hand to his heart, he hastily departed, or, as Miss B. would have described it, "fled!"

“Miss Buffy,” cried Mr. Deputy Pewtress, “your Ma’ insists upon your coming,” and Adeliza with a palpitating heart attended the summons. The meal was hastily despatched.

“Why lau ! Addy, you don ’t eat ; what ! no shrimps, Addy, such beauties ! why the sea air has taken away your appetite.” The breakfast ended, Adeliza dashed into her bonnet, and hurried to the uninhabited house to be “furnished ;” removing the brick, she found a note addressed to her in her own name. The contents ran as follow :—

“Ange de mes rêves ! âme sœur de mon âme !  
rosée du ciel, soleil de mes jours ! étoile de mes  
nuits ! Oh ! lady, let the sweet bud of love now  
ripen to a beauteous flower ! Write but one  
word,—one half kind word to thy devoted,

“EDGAR.”

The latter part was clear enough, and by the

aid of a French dictionary (the only mode of getting at the Margate meaning of Edgar's French,) the former was soon rendered equally so.

“The god of love, the archer boy, sly Cupid,” (as Miss Buffy metaphorically described it in a letter to her cousin Tilda,) “had made considerable havoc on her heart,—had spread an air of pensive sadness o’er her brow,—and caused the pearly tear to glisten in her eyes.” Every morning did she appear in the garden, and as regularly as she appeared the constant Edgar was at his post, depositing a note into the neat red brick letter-box, (making this Pyramus-and-Thisbe sort of love by means of a wall,) formed of three bricks and a slanter, in the manner children make sparrow traps. On one or two occasions they had exchanged words,—few, very few words; and one evening when the *amorosa* had returned late from the library, Edgar had so far forgotten his bashfulness as to

press her hand with his lips; nay, if the truth is to be spoken, her fair brow. Still he was silent as to his views and his surname; Adaliza had heard that love was blind, her idol appeared nearly dumb. Twice had she caught a glimpse of her hero on horseback, mounted on a prancing piebald horse. "What a noble form!" Often too, after she had sought her pillow, to dream of love and Edgar, her thoughts were disturbed by a serenade, "Pretty star of the night!" "Sleep thee, or wake thee, lady fair!" In vain did the love-sick damsel exert her best energies to ascertain the name of her admirer; the letters breathed of love, and as usual were made up of overstrained professions, flimsy compliments, declarations of his admiration for beauty and hatred of sordid wealth; with a tirade against parental cruelty, and an *olla podrida* of love in a cottage, roses, eternal constancy, sun-flowers, Gretna Green, and suicide! Every quotation—from Shakspeare's

“ Doubt thou the stars are fire,  
Doubt that the sun doth move,  
Doubt truth to be a liar,  
But never doubt I love ! ”

— to Byron’s “ The kiss dear maid thy lip has left,” &c. had been employed. One letter, or rather scrap, gave Miss Buffy considerable trouble to understand or decipher. It ran as follows :

——“ Ottocar will never wound the heart that loves him ! ”

“ THRICE HAPPY ZELIDA ! ”

“ Death has no terrors for me ! — life has no charms ! — see — see — see ! a warrior’s weapon frees a warrior’s soul ! !

“ *On—till end !* ”

What could this mean ? Adeliza knew that all heroes were eccentric : “ Ottocar and Zelida ! — a warrior’s weapon ! ” could her Edgar contemplate self-destruction ? — the thought was madness. The month had now nearly

elapsed, and Miss Buffy had communicated the painful intelligence that the following Wednesday was to see her departure from Margate. But previous to that day events were doomed to occur, scarcely dreamed of by the gentle Adeliza. Edgar's letters had increased ; there was a double delivery in numbers and in tenderness (the unfurnished house was always furnished) ; he had ventured to hint at his hand and his fortune in one epistle, teeming with lover's eyes and lover's sighs, hearts and darts, Cupid's fire and fond desire ! Finally, he proposed an elopement, pointing out that a cruel-hearted guardian would cut him off without a shilling (a difficult operation,) if he married without his consent ; but once married, his parent would, he was given to understand, relent.

We must now take our readers to the breakfast-table of the Arabella-crescent party, on the morning of the Saturday previous to their intended departure. Mrs. Buffy, the Pew-

tresses, and the children, were discussing a projected ramble on the sands, and Miss Buffy was counting the minutes that were to elapse before her dear Edgar appeared, when a finely decorated waggon, in which was a band of music, passed the Crescent.

“ Oh, ma'am ! ” cried the maid-servant running in, almost breathless, “ them gentlemen's the players ; they begged I'd give you these bills, and said they hoped for your patronage.

The deputy took one about a yard and a quarter long, and read the following announcement :—

“ MR. FITZ-ANNANDALE'S NIGHT ;

CIRQUE OLYMPIQUE,

LONDON ROAD, MARGATE.

Mademoiselle Eugénie Briselair, from Paris, for one night only.

Extensive and unequalled Stud !

High-trained Steeds !!

Stupendous Elephant !!!

Fairy Ponies !!!!

Sagacious Palfreys !!!!!

*Monday the 22nd of July.*

A new Equestrian, Dramatic, Military, and Chivalrous  
Spectacle, called

‘OURMYAH AND KHOI;

‘OR THE LOST HEIR OF AZERBJDAN!’

‘Mohammed Raim Mirza,’ by Mr. Fitz-Annandale.

*In the course of the evening,*

Vaulting, Tight-rope Dancing, Horsemanship.

‘The Courier of Naples,’ by Mr. Fitz-Annandale.

‘The Swiss Milkmaid,’ by Mademoiselle Eugénie Briselair,  
her first appearance.

To conclude with the last Comic and Grotesque  
Extravaganza of

‘JOHNNY GILPIN.’

*Full particulars in the Bills of the day.*

Boxes Two Shillings, Pit One Shilling, Gallery Sixpence.

Tickets and Places to be had at the CIRCUS, and of Mr.  
FITZ-ANNANDALE, at the Shakspeare’s Head, London  
Road.”

“Law! what a treat it would be for the  
children!” exclaimed Mrs. Buffy.

“So it would,” replied the deputy; “sup-  
pose we all go; let’s see, four box tickets,  
eight shillings; three children, half price,  
three shillings — Hannah and Betsy in the



gallery—only twelve shillings I declare; suppose you step down, Mrs. B., and secure us the seats.”

This was agreed to, and within a quarter of an hour the box sheet list announced, among other names, “ Mrs. Buffy, two front rows.”

Adeliza had kept her appointment with the faithful Edgar, trusting that woman’s wit would assist her in elucidating the long-kept mystery; four o’clock came, and the happy pair were wandering through a narrow lane that led to the beach. Edgar pressed his suit, the damsel blushed, and proposed speaking to her ma’; at which the mysterious lover bit his lips, rolled his eyes, beat his breast, and declared “ that he never would be dependent upon maternal tyranny! for weeks he had writhed under the torture of suspense. If she would not elope, farewell happiness, farewell life !”

We will not dwell upon his persuasions, for “ a winning tongue had *he* !” When Miss

Buffy named the Monday's play, the hero started, but recovering himself urged *that* as a fitting occasion; entreated her to feign illness, and as the clock struck ten to meet him at the usual rendezvous: there a chaise would be in waiting. She consented, when Edgar passionately burst forth: "If it were now to die 'twere now to be most happy, for I feel my soul hath her content so absolute, that not another comfort like to this succeeds in unknown fate!"

They parted—their vows having been mutually pledged. We pass over the intermediate time—hours appeared years to one or both; the Monday night approached;—dinner had been ordered at three precisely. The prudent mother had wrapped her little dears up in cloaks and shawls, had stuffed their little pockets with oranges, barley-sugar, and gingerbread nuts, and the party were about to leave home, when Adeliza Buffy entered the room, her face bound up, suffering, as she

said, excruciating pain with a toothach, and declared how impossible it was for her to leave the house.

“What a pity!” exclaimed all.

“Shall I stay with you,” asked one of the good-natured little Pewtresses.

“One ticket lost,” grumbled Mrs. Buffy: “stay — Mrs. Balls may want one! Here, Hannah,—My compliments to Mrs. Balls, and offer her this box ticket;—admits two into the pit.”

Hannah soon returned, with Mrs. B.’s duty, and she would gladly avail herself of it.

“Deduct two shillings from the bill, Mr. Deputy,” said the prudent lady.

Poor Addy, after sundry injunctions to be very careful of herself, to foment her mouth, to bandage her face with flannel, &c., was, when a thousand other remedies had been suggested, left to herself. How anxiously did the hours pass! eight o’clock came, then nine; at ten she left the house, and found her im-

patient lover waiting in a chaise—a one-horse one; with a fluttering heart she entered it, and the pair eloped with beating hearts and a post-horse ticket.

The party returned from the Circus highly delighted with the performance. Miss Pewtress was full of the young courier, Mr. Fitz-Annandale; the children were repeating the clown's eccentricities, "Here's a white handkerchief, washed with black soap, and dried on a gridiron!" "Here's your garters, long and strong; two makes a pair!"

"Now, Mrs. Balls," said Mrs. Buffy, to the landlady as she entered, "please order up our bit of supper, that nice cold ham, and some treacle and bread for the children."

Mrs. Balls looked what Mrs. Buffy called, struck all of a heap.

"Bless me, Mrs. B., you look alarmed—what has happened?"

"Miss Buffy—oh!—don't ask me, ma'am!"

"What of Adeliza?"

“ Oh, ma’am ! ”

“ Not worse, I hope ? ”

“ Worse than that, ma’am—she ’s gone ! ”

“ Gone ! ” almost shrieked the agitated mother.

“ Eloped ! ”

“ Eloped ?—with who ?—how ?—where ? ”

“ Read, ma’am ! read ! ” giving at the same time a small packet.

Mrs. Buffy hurriedly opened it ; a letter from Adeliza ! She glanced over its contents ; it was the usual appeal to parental sympathy, and was full of regrets, sighs, hearts, and darts. A few lines from the hero of the flight accompanied it, signed Edgar Fitz-Annandale, urging forgiveness, and concluding with the Venetian ducal advice—

“ To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,  
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.”

When the name of Fitz-Annandale appeared a sudden light came across her mind. Could it

be?—the spangled man!—the play actor!—the horse-rider in flesh-coloured tights and satin jacket! On further inquiry it proved to be too true. Adeliza had eloped with the hero of the Circus.

No pains were spared to discover the fugitives, but all endeavours were unavailing. We cannot expose our readers to the rage of Mrs. Buffy when she discovered the object of her daughter's flight. The happy couple had escaped, with unchanged affection but with scarcely any other change, to Southend. On the following Sunday the congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Rochford, heard the banns published, for the first time, between Edgar Dale, bachelor, and Adeliza Euphemia Buffy, spinster; and in due time the latter was endowed with all the worldly goods and chattels of the far-famed Fitz-Annandale, consisting of—

One Turkish dress.

One red Hussar dress.

Two whips.

One pair yellow Hessian boots.  
One pair buckskin ditto.  
One pair flesh-coloured pantaloons.  
Pair of wings.  
One black Brutus.  
Two pair of mustachios.  
Hare's foot and pot of rouge.

Edgar Dale was the son of a respectable cotton-spinner at Manchester, and was apprenticed to a mercer in that town; and here we must digress for an instant to remark on the infringements that have lately been made upon the rights of women. The shops of haberdashers, mercers, and shawl dépôts, swarm with white cravats and young men, equally well starched, who fawn over silks and edgings "like a sick girl." Is it not truly disgusting to hear a dressed-up, ignorant coxcomb recommending a cap, dress, or any other article appertaining to the female toilet, and descanting, with ungrammatical nicety, on the fashions of the day? "This lace, ma'am, is very much wore; a beautiful article! We have sold a *grete* quantity. Nothing can exceed the ele-

gance of that worked canazou ; it is, indeed, accessively beautiful ! ladies is in ecstasies at it. These shawls come very cheap, and will be found uncommon comfortable."

At an early age Edgar Dale became passionately fond of horses, and in vain tried to persuade his parents to allow him to enlist into the cavalry. Edgar had a soul above cotton, and at the age of eighteen enlisted into the gallant 18th Hussars. The commanding officer, on discovering him to be under indentures, of course released him, and his father insisted on his becoming an *officer* in the counting-house, not in the camp. Heaven, however, "soon granted what his sire denied," for a troop of equestrians who were "witching the world of (Manchester) with noble horsemanship," had such an effect upon the young clerk's mind, that one fine night he decamped from his employer's house, having received the promise of an engagement if he would meet the company at Lancaster. Dale being considered too plebeian



a name, he added a Fitzannan to it, and in less than a month was announced in the play bills “ Master of the ring, Mr. Edgar Fitz-Annandale ;” dressed out in a blue tunic, embroidered with silver, with Hessian boots, Spanish hat and feather, and a long elegant whip to trail in one continual round O, through saw-dust.

Dale now devoted himself to study, and ere two moons had passed over his head had appeared as the hero of an equestrian and dramatic spectacle. By dint of perseverance, he, ere long, united in his own person the following departments ;—second tragedian,—light comedian,—heavy business, low comedian,—tenor and bass singer,—the Irishman and Scotchman,—prompter,—utterer of the thunder, lightning, and snow storms,—player of the big drum, and caller of the supernumeraries. The retirement of the principal tragedian gave Dale an opening ; and being fortunate enough to make “ a dead hit ” in a suc-

cessful piece, his fame ran through the country. A most flattering engagement had been offered to him at Margate, and his good star made him fall in Miss Buffy's path, on his way to join it. His last benefit had enabled him to possess himself of a "two pound tenner frock-coat, made to order;" a military cloak, "two pounds two;" and a four and sixpenny gosamer.

Hearing that Miss Buffy was an only daughter, with prospects, Dale had devoted himself to her. Our readers will have divined that the French note which gave Miss Buffy so much trouble to translate was the production of the *première danseuse* Mademoiselle Eugénie Briselair; and the mysterious scrap of paper, his own part in the last scene of a melodrama. The honey or treacle moon passed off, as such cloying moons usually do; the bride was all smiles, the bridegroom all devotion,—when on the fifth week, and when the time of "lips though blooming must still be fed," was in full

force, a letter was placed in Mr. Fitz-Annan-dale's hands ; it was from Mr. Beverly Gagen, formerly property man in the Cirque Olympique, but who, having by the death of an uncle come into a small fortune, had started a theatrical concern for himself. His offer was most liberal ; highest terms for Fitz-Annandale and his wife's services. We give it in his own words :—

“ DEAR FITZ,

“ We open at Fillongley on the 10th. Will you and Mrs. F. lead the business? terms thirty-five shillings a week: the highest ever given. Two benefits clear after charges: ‘ An you love me, Hall,’ send me a speedy answer.

“ Thine evermore,

“ While this machine is to him,

“ JACK BEVERLY GAGEN.

“ P. S. Mrs. G. had her benefit last night, such a ‘ bumper at parting!’ eight pounds five ; crowds sent from the doors. ‘ What think you of that, Master Brook?’

“ I have such a piece for the opening, you dog ! Such a part for you ! a dead hit ! lots of fat ! Won’t it bring ’em down. Kean would give his ears for it. Won’t you *coal* it ? ”

After some little consideration the offer was accepted, and the Fillongley play-bills announced, for the opening night, “an historical production of pomp and splendour, introducing all the resources of the theatre, with splendid scenic effects, and one of the most numerous and select companies ever gathered within the walls of a theatre, including Miss Fitz-Annan-dale (dropping her marital title), her first appearance on any stage, and Mr. Fitz-Annan-dale, unquestionably the most talented tragedian of the day.”

After two months at Fillongley the company had removed to Highbury Cross, and the accident we have alluded to took place. Miss Fitz-Annandale had discovered that in her profession there is as much acting necessary off

the stage as on it, in private as in public; and, hearing of the party assembled at Compton Audley, had determined to get up a *scena*. The mystery attached to her birth,—for she gave out that her parents moved in the highest society,—the notoriety of the elopement, had worked wonders in the circles she moved in; and as her benefit was shortly to take place, she thought that some little additional advantage would be gained by the mysterious feint, or faint, she had practised: and true it is, such was the effect produced. It was buzzed round the theatre that the heroine had formerly been intimate with the Atherleys! nay, even some ventured to hint that an attachment had existed between her and Ravensworth: there was a mystery attached to the elopement which none had dissolved, and when, after a short interval, the curtain drew up and found Miss Fitz-Annandale in an attitude of hope and fear, three rounds of applause and shouts that echoed welcomed her. With a handkerchief to

her eyes and her hand to her heart, she curtsied to the very ground; the *furore* was increased. Garlands and bouquets of artificial flowers were showered down from the upper Proscenium box, which, as is usual at small country theatres, was Mrs. Beverly Gagen's own dressing-room. The audience sympathised with Miss Fitz-Annandale; men were anathematised as gay deceivers, and the theatrical heroine was looked upon as an innocent martyr.

The Atherley party left the theatre at the conclusion of the first piece; Lady Atherley had felt a pang when Dudley's name was mentioned, but the recollection of the water-party flashed across her mind, and the drive home and the supper were enlivened by many a jest at the expense of the *ci-devant* Adeliza Euphemia Buffy.

## CHAPTER II.

## SPA HOUNDS.

*We met ; 'twas in a crowd !*

T. HAYNES BAYLY.

“THE covert of an English *rendezvous de chasse* has been christened not unaptly the *coffee-room* ; there is scarcely a hunting county, in which the forthcoming deaths and marriages, politics and scandal, are elsewhere manufactured.” So says the talented authoress of “*Mothers and Daughters* ;” and certainly upon the occasion to which we are about to allude, the truth of this observation was signally realised. It was on the day following the one we have referred to in our last chapter, that, to the delight of the water-drinking inhabitants of the

salubrious town of Gorseington, the hounds were to meet within two miles of the Spa. At an early hour the pump-room was deserted; the "Promenade" was cleared; the "military band," consisting of half a dozen wandering musicians, dressed out in the town uniform, (white coats, tastily turned up with orange-coloured lappets, and who, from this costume of magnesia and rhubarb had obtained the *sobriquet* of "Dr. Gregory's mixture,") were wasting their sweetness upon a few pampered footmen leading their mistresses' obese spaniels and dropsical lapdogs, and on a few nurses, fat and forty, who, with their *anti-Malthusian* charges of Henrys, Willys, Frankys, Charlys, Tommys, Lettys, Carys, Fannys, Annes, were left the sole tenants of the walk. The master of the ceremonies had doffed his *pumps* and his pump-room, and, with military spurs had mounted his Rosinante. The medical men had put their "pill-boxes" into requisition; and even the tax-gatherer had mounted his "quatre ace,"



a low under-duty one-horse four-wheel chaise, just to see the hounds throw off.

Soon after ten the road absolutely swarmed with pedestrians and equestrians, and not the least interesting feature of the scene was the motley character of the bipeds and quadrupeds ; butchers, bakers, chimney-sweeps, ballad-singers, beggars, nursery-maids ; landaus laden with sporting beauties, open flys freighted with old and young ladies ; wheel chairs, with dyspeptic patients, drawn by bloated-looking two-legged animals ; vehicles of every description, from my lord's coach and four with splendid outriders, to old Farmer Oakleigh's waggon, containing a dozen of his servants and labourers, were seen in succession ;

“ Buggy, whiskey, gig, or dog-cart, currie, or tandem.”

Horses of every sort and species attended ; children on donkeys, little girls on dainty side-saddles. Everybody seemed determined to bring his own dog, “in case it could be

of any use :” there were bull-dogs, sheep-dogs, greyhounds, spaniels, terriers, mongrels, turnspits, curs, and poodles; long-legged, short-legged, bandy-legged, long ears, cropped ears, bush-tails, dock-tails, bob-tails.

The general appearance resembled a fair; stalls of ginger-pop, brandy-balls, hot pies, were got up at a short notice, and trade promised to be brisk. The fixture, being so near the town, was not in great favour with the regular sportsmen, and the muster, therefore, of red coats was very thin. A fox was, in fair time, unkennelled, when, just at the verge of the cover, the young gentlemen of the “temple of learning,” kept by the Reverend Nicodemus Lumney, M.A., who seemed determined to save the hounds the trouble of “catching the fox,” and who looked upon the sport as “*for et præterea nihil*,” set up such a discordant yelling and screeching, that the consequence naturally was the field was robbed of a good run,

and poor reynard, in turning short back, was chopped in the cover.

We must now introduce our readers to a prominent group of sportsmen, or rather idlers, encircling a lady, who, from her love of the chace, had received the appellation of “the galloping goddess.” This presiding deity—Miss St. Leger—was, as usual, holding her court, and furnishing a *chronique scandaleuse* to a crowd of *gobemouches*. In early life she had figured as a Brighton *belle*; and now, at a certain, or rather uncertain age, acted as a hanger-on to the rich. Miss St. Leger owned to thirty, though it was shrewdly supposed that she must have chronicled many more summers. She was fast approaching that melancholy state called a *has been*. She unquestionably deserved the well-timed retort of the celebrated Voltaire, “Un sot lui disait, ‘Savez-vous bien que je n’ai que trente ans?’ ‘Je dois le savoir,’ répondit Voltaire, ‘car il y a plus de dix ans que vous me le

dites.” Being “sole daughter” of her mother’s “house and heart,” Mrs. St. Leger’s high and independent spirit never made her shrink from making many a bold stroke for a husband for her young Diana. She held her forth as an heiress, her sole anxiety being to obtain a *partie* for her that would redeem the fallen fortunes of her house. The most cunning tacticians will sometimes fail; so did Mrs. St. Leger. She had for twelve years manœuvred without success. In vain had she invited half the *eligibles* in England to eat the Admiral’s venison and drink his claret; in vain had her daughter, who possessed the cameleon-like quality of adopting the very colour of the feelings she wished to enslave, talked politics with the politician, sporting with the sportsman, poetry with the poet; in vain had she sighed with the sentimental, laughed with the gay, been enthusiastic with the enthusiast, unassuming and retiring, or spirited, as it suited her plans and her persons. To her mortification, none of the

men *would* propose. One Captain, of the 24th native East India Company's service, against whose heart she had directed the full battery of her charms and graces, had ventured to sound the way, by gently hinting at love in a cottage being delightful, but that there must be some little safeguard against "poverty coming in at the door;" the result, however, was unsatisfactory, for, "on speaking to pa," it was soon ascertained that Miss St. Leger's only possession, by way of fortune, was her face; the Captain, therefore, sounded a retreat. For a time she enacted the forlorn and broken-hearted, wandered about alone, read sentimental books, wrote sentimental verses, apostrophised the moon, and warbled love ditties.

In due time Miss St. Leger recovered, and began to weave her web anew; but, unfortunately, our modern Penelope, unlike her ancient namesake, found that the webs that were woven after dinner were unravelled in the morning, when the claret had evaporated

and cool reflection came. One consolation ever remained — she remembered that Ninon de L'Enclos made a conquest at eighty years of age !

Miss St. Leger was popular among men ; the secret charm by which she held ascendancy over them was by conforming to their humours, subscribing to their prejudices, follies, and caprices, and administering largely to their vanity. Above all, she succeeded by the patience with which she listened to the endless babble about themselves. . Latterly, Miss St. Leger had devoted herself to the hunting Spas, and had come out as an Amazonian of the first class train. She was an intrepid rider, ever forward in the chace, and raved about field-sports, flying-leaps, ploughed acres, and scarlet coats ; was *au fait* at driving, — always made a book on the Derby, — was a great politician, and excellent in canvassing at an election. In one word, she was a man in woman's guise :

—to use her own expression, “five feet eleven, without her shoes.” In her adoption of any pursuit, she always went *à l’outrance*, and it was now a sufficient recommendation that it was anti-feminine;—a loud voice, forward look, independent air, a smack of the whip, a slap on the shoulder, a noisy accost, were expedients employed by her to excite notoriety. She piqued herself upon saying and doing any thing and everything, perfectly reckless of the consequences. In addition to these qualities she possessed the venom of a disappointed spinster, and was the *caillette* of the neighbourhood.

This digression has led us from the subject. Miss St. Leger was now in her glory, and never more completely happy than on the occasion we have alluded to, when she found herself the principal object of attraction to those persons whose suffrages alone she coveted, — the *gentlemen*.

“Cold scent, I am afraid,—country deep. But, Reynolds, where’s your sister? Oh, I see she’s in her carriage;—she don’t take after her aunt. *Her* motto was NECK OR NOTHING. She was superior to all sense of danger,—damped by no disappointments,—checked by no difficulties,—terrified by no example—she flew over hedge and ditch. Take care, sir, my mare has a sad trick of lashing out;”—addressing a demure-looking gentleman beside her, who, in the Irish fashion, had received the blow before the word. “Captain, how’s the gallant grey?—not the worse for the *earther*.—What news at the Spa, Glanville?—dead slow, I’m told. So! Wyvill’s going to be married.—I’m delighted; and yet, I don’t know why I should be; poor fellow! he never did me any harm.—Talking of marriages, only think, Spencer, of Miss Cranfield refusing the SOLICITOR general, Vear, the third time of asking! Never did mortal man better deserve



his sobriquet, *Percy vere*. But what say you to your immaculate beauty, Lady Atherley? Of course you have heard of *her escapade*? bolted, gone off with Dudley Ravensworth. Poor Lord Atherley heard of it at feeding time: sad loss! — a dinner and a wife on the same day! They talk of a field-day. Ravensworth's a dead shot — I should like to be in at the death. But, hark! I hear a holloa! — gone, away! — forward! — no mistake! — Whoo! — whoo! — forward!" And away scampered the lady, hounds, horses, and riders, all mad together, — madder than any March hare that ever poacher confined in a wiry strait-waistcoat.

This conversation, so abruptly terminated by the "hullabaloo" that we have already alluded to, had met the quick ears of Mr. Lyall, the gentleman who did the *Mirror of Fashion and Sporting Intelligence* for the *Spa Inquisitor*, and who had collected infor-

mation enough to furnish an article for the forthcoming paper. His motto was, — however truly or not we leave to our readers —

“ Imitatio vitæ, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis.”

CICERO.

We give a specimen of his paper, by cul-  
ling a few beauties of refined composition  
from this weekly wonder of the Spa world.  
In attacking a cotemporary, he says, “ Dull,  
despicable, and disgusting, in the details; ” and  
is it not a fine alliteration after the manner of

“ Lo! from Lemnos, limping lamely lags the lowly lord.”

We have afterwards, well *mosaica'd* in an ar-  
ticle against the *Spa Dispatch*, the follow-  
ing spirited phrases:—“A Literary Shoplifter.”  
— “ This panderism to a venal press is a no-  
torious and unalterably detestable and mad-  
dening manifesto of blasphemous and brutal  
rebellion.” Again—“ This horrible weekly  
vonniter of daring depravity creates a sickly

excitement to robbery, cheating, and every specious species of malignant villany; florid with audacious impiety, this infidel newspaper revels in atheistic democracy, and wantons in uncertificated defiance over the precious preserves of public decency, blazing with both barrels of blasphemy and hate at our holy institutions, and bringing down all that is sacred and dear to us, right and left. His profanity we can pardon, because it is mingled with his muddy heart's blood; but his bitter, incessant, and flagrant outrages upon the Town Council and the Spa Vestry call up at once our boiling indignation, unbridled horror, and unrestrained vengeance."

The article on the elopement we reserve for another chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

## BALL AT COMPTON AUDLEY.

“Why, is it not provoking? There, had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements! So becoming a disguise! So amiable a ladder of ropes! Conscious moon — four horses — Scotch parson — with such paragraphs in the newspapers. Oh, I shall die with disappointment!”

SHERIDAN'S *Rivals*.

SELDOM had a long-projected *fête* been so fortunate in weather as Lady Atherley's first *déjeuner dansant*. No expense and no pains had been spared to render this long-projected entertainment splendid and elegant; it was to begin with a concert, which was to be followed by a *déjeuner à la fourchette*, and succeeded by a

ball. A military band was stationed on the lawn, marquees and tents interposed their gay stripes among the green thickets and shrubberies. In the evening the house and gardens were gaily illuminated ; large beacon-fires blazed on the hills, shedding a red and lurid light on the surrounding woods. The dance commenced, the enlivening sounds of music fell joyously on every ear,

“And all went merry as a marriage bell !”

At midnight the lights were taken from the windows to give more effect to a display of fireworks, which a celebrated “pyrotechnist, from the Royal Gardens, Vauxhall,” had been engaged to exhibit.

The entrance-hall was metamorphosed into a garden of rare and costly exotics ; sparkling lamps of every colour seemed dancing among the trees and shrubs, through which an avenue was formed that led to the foot of the grand staircase.

The principal gallery was converted into a most superb temple, and ended in a temporary room, which was appropriated to the votaries of Terpsichore. The scene here seemed actually the work of enchantment—it was one blaze of splendour! The first artists of the day had been employed in decorating the room in the *François premier* style. Mirrors of immense size reflected back the dazzling splendours of an hundred brilliantly-illuminated chandeliers. The whole of the rooms on the ground-floor were thrown into one, and formed the supper-room; the tables were covered with services of gold and silver plate, containing every luxury which fancy could suggest or princely opulence procure. The *fête* passed as *fêtes* are wont to do; every one wore the face of pleasure, and a very few were really pleased. We must here give our readers a full, true, and particular account of an event which took place at this ball, and which attached some little scandal to Miss St. Leger.

One of her humblest of slaves was a gallant young penniless Ensign of a regiment of the line, whose face was his fortune, and who had for some months, to vary the monotony of country quarters, bestowed upon her the greatest share of his regimental attention. One eventful evening, whether by love, liquor, or the hopes of lucre (for Miss St. Leger gave out that she was an heiress), Ensign Gustavus Battersby had been so far carried away by his passion as to propose an elopement. The lady blushed, hesitated, and urged the enamoured flagbearer "to speak to papa." This was declared to be impossible ; for, should the affair be made known to his own family, he would not only be disinherited, but measures would be taken to prevent his union.

"Farewell, then ;—

"'Twas ever thus, from childhood's hour,  
I've seen my fondest hopes decay !"

sighed Gustavus, turning up his eyes in the

true sentimental style ; “ but you will be happy, and no matter what becomes of me ! ”

“ Oh, don’t say so ! don’t say so ! ” exclaimed Miss St. Leger, taking out her most elaborately worked white cambric pocket-handkerchief, trimmed with lace edging, and shedding a few tears.

“ What is the matter, dear Diana ? ” asked the Ensign. “ What is the matter ? ”

“ Oh ! oh ! I—am—so—miserable ! ”

“ Miserable ! what have I said to make you so ? ” tenderly replied the youth.

“ Cruel, unfeeling ! — how can you ask me ? — how can you show so little sympathy, so little sensibility ? My peace of mind is gone for ever ! ” sighed Miss Diana.

“ Now do, dear, be comforted ! my love, my passion, will yield to neither years nor sorrow ; time may soften it, but remembrance will hallow it. Be comforted ; — I shall be forgotten ; another more worthy will take my place.”

“ Never ! never ! never ! I am miserable,



wretched, distracted !” exclaimed the frantic young lady. “I shall be alone unpitied !” Here she gave a shriek as if she had undergone a fresh accession of agony, threw herself upon a sofa, and forthwith went into violent hysterics.

The Ensign fanned her, and as she recovered she heard a soft and silvery tone whisper, “Fly, then, to my arms, mine own ;—

‘ I ’ll prove myself thy lover against the world in arms !’

together let us glide down the stream of life, regardless of the frowns of fate or fortune.”

The lady blushed more deeply, and faltered forth, in accents of kindly reproach, her fears of the consequences of a runaway match. The gallant subaltern renewed his attack with energy, and, after administering a potent portion of “soft sawder,” on the principle of the Italian proverb, “Si prendono piu mosche col mele che coll’aceto,” and which honied voice of flattery sweetly fell upon the ears of the now deliberating damsel, it was finally arranged

that at the Compton Audley ball the elopement should take place.

The Ensign, true to his appointment, had a chaise ready in the park. Eleven o'clock was the appointed time: muffled up in his military cloak, with another on his arm for his inamorata, he stationed himself in a small building attached to the conservatory; there, amidst logs of wood, flower-pots, rollers, spades, hoes, rakes, and other implements of gardening, the love-sick swain anxiously awaited the arrival of his promised partner in flight. The conservatory opened into the ball-room.

The clock chimed eleven; another quarter passed; the Ensign remained in a state of breathless trepidation. He now fancied he heard a step, and cautiously leaving his hiding place approached the conservatory, the noise of footsteps increased; — dreading to leave his *fiancée* in danger, he opened the door, when a scene presented itself that baffles all description. The temporary room that connected the

conservatory with the ball-room was in flames; sparks were flying about in all directions,—a few of the guests, assisted by the servants, were tearing away the draperies and endeavouring to stay the progress of the fire. In the farthest extremity of the conservatory Miss St. Leger was in a fit of hysterics, under the care of an abigail (her partner in the dance having with the true masculine dread of a *scene* left her under the pretext of getting a glass of water); loud were her sobs, they touched the Ensign's heart. As she perceived him the fit was most vehemently increased; hartshorn, salvolatile, smelling-salts were applied in vain. The daring sub.'s first thought was to rush forward and offer his assistance to the fainting fair one; when the entrance of Lord Atherley's steward, attended by a *posse comitatus*, giving instructions to search the premises for the incendiary, made him sound a precipitate retreat. Miss St. Leger gave a piercing shriek, such a one, that Velluti, had he heard it, would have died

of mortification at the thought that she could pitch a note an octave higher than he could.

The Ensign made a signal, Miss St. Leger would have followed had not the arrival of two engines impeded her progress; she made the attempt, and received the shock of water. The gentle Niobe, all tears, was now a second Ondine.

But we must return to the hero of the night's adventure, who, the moment he heard the gathering fury of the element and the threats of the constables, darted off in double quick time, followed by two Bow-street officers, who had been expressly engaged to superintend the arrangement of the *fête*; for in those days policemen had not even a prospective existence. Now these worthies, Messrs. Gribble and Cocksedge, were of a race that flourished some twenty years ago,—in these days totally extinct. The former was bulky in figure, rubicund in countenance, knowing in physiognomy: the latter was thin, gaunt, and shrivelled; they

were neither in running condition: Gribble puffed like a grampus, and realised Byron's beautiful image—"heavy and slow, like the first drops of a thunder shower!" while Cock-sedge looked like an odd volume of *Swift's* works. Before they had reached the first lodge, they gave evident signs of what the sporting newspapers call "shutting up," and were fairly stopped for want of breath. At this moment the running was taken up by two sturdy young gamekeepers, who, hearing the cry "Stop thief!" lost no time in joining the chase; but the young soldier's metal was up, and for some time he outran his pursuers. "He's a game one!" cried one; "he deserves to escape." "Hooroa! we have him now," replied the other; "he makes for the sunk fence, when he finds that fail, he'll make for the gate. I'll double him now."

"Gently, Dick, fair play's a jewel, give the poor devil a chance; why, there's ne'er a greyhound in my Lord's kennel as would do that;

no doubling, damme, that 's worse than a dog !” As the keeper had surmised, the Ensign finding the fence impracticable made for the gate, but here his good fortune deserted him : to prevent carriages entering at this end of the park, a chain had fastened it up. Had it not been for this he would have got off with flying colours, though whether such a retreat would become a subaltern our readers must determine.

Meanwhile the constabulary force of two returned to the house, and were being regaled in the servants' hall, giving a somewhat exaggerated account of the pursuit to some unsuspecting-looking obtuse bumpkins and country domestics. “Sitch a gang, I never seed,” said Gribble; “three reglar craksmen from Lunnun. I cotched one by the scuff of his neck, but let him go, cos as how he warn't the ringleader; him as we seed in the summer ouse.”

“I had two upon me at once,” chimed in Cocksedge; “two more out-and-outers, devil-

my-care fellows, I never met ; the one with the red choker round his squeeze was, I *rather* think, Paddington Jem, under sentence of *eighty-four* months, jist escaped from the hulks.”—“Well, it ’s a mercy we wern’t both shot, for all three were reglarly armed,” repeated both together.

At this moment any further expression of their prowess was put an end to by the announcement made by a tittering still-room maid, “that one of the prisoners was taken !”

“Aye, I thought I had maimed him !” said Gribble exultingly ; “I knew he could not get far. But where ’s Mr. Springett ?”—the name of the county Dogberry. “Let ’s do things in a rigilar way, and no mistake !”

The old though somewhat profane proverb of talking of a certain ugly sprite, &c., was realised by the entrance of Mr. Springett himself ; he was a bustling, active, little man, who asked fifty questions without taking breath, or a reply.

“Where ’s the prisoner?—who took him?—what ’s his name?—where was he found lurking?”

“Please your honour! Mr. Springett,” said Gribble, (who had a high respect for the *paid* authorities, and bowing as low as his corpulency would permit,) “my partner Cocksedge and I received information as there was a hang-dog looking fellow with two or three pals a-prowling about the premises. Well, the ringleader,—but here he is to answer for himself.” The gaping servants, who with “greedy ears” were “devouring up” the Londoner’s recital, made way for the unfortunate prisoner; who, with his arms pinioned, was ushered into the room, under the custody of the two gamekeepers, bearing trophies of victory, the now torn cloak that the providence of the young officer had provided for his fair mistress. As true chroniclers, we are bound to say the hero of the night’s adventure cut but a sorry figure; his clothes were sullied and his face



was scratched. Mr. Springett was now in his glory, and began with wonderful volubility to interrogate the prisoner and witnesses.

“What’s your name, young man, place of abode, and profession? — what brought you into the county?—what are your associates’ names? When did you return from transportation? Young men, (addressing himself to the gamekeepers,) you may give up your charge; your activity shall be reported to the proper *authorities*. Messrs. Gribble and Cockledge, most active and zealous officers, will see the prisoner properly secured.”

“Butler, is there a strong room, a cellar, or coal-hole, that will answer as a place of confinement for the night? in the morning we will take him before the bench.” A private conversation as to the security of sundry cellars was being carried on between the butler and the head-constable, in a low tone, which gave the Ensign an opportunity of turning to Mr. Gribble, (who had

now unpinioned his arms,) and making use of one of his hands he inserted a guinea in the palm of the Bow-street functionary,—adding, in a side voice, “ I can afford to pay for a *good* lodging ; it shall be doubled in the morning.”

“ All right, I ’m up, a riglar flash one, —right as the mail !” said Mr. Gribble aside, giving a knowing significant wink. Mr. Springett sat swelling and fuming in official dignity, and in a stentorian voice cried “ silence !” (echoed by the next in command) “ silence in the court ! handcuff the prisoner,—see him safely locked up in the coal-cellar,—in the morning we ’ll take him before the worshipful bench.”

“ Ax your pardon for the hinterrupshin,” said Mr. Gribble ; “ but p’raps you ’ll allow me to make one remark. It ’s not for me to dictate to a man of your experience, Mr. Springett, but you ’ll *excuse* me if I say, as we *haave* werry strict orders from our worthy and re-

spectable magistrate at Bow Street, never on no account *whatsumever* to take bail, or lose sight of a prisoner, suspected of murder, highway robbery, or h'arson. Now, as the young man is accused of the latter, by your leave, my partner and I,—if so be as you gives him in charge to us,—will sit up with him all night ; for tho' the dooty I may say has been werry ardoos to-day, our time's the public's, and in sitch cases we are willing to sacrifice our personal comfits."

Mr. Springett was delighted to see so much zeal and public spirit displayed, and, after arranging with the steward, it was finally agreed that the prisoner and his guardians should pass the night together in mutual custody. Mr. Gribble having so far succeeded in his plans, and being anxious that no one should suspect his connivance with the prisoner, with whom he expected (to adopt his own phraseology) to have a *sunshiny* job, now thought it necessary to give vent to the following

anathemas:—"I knew he war'nt arter no good,—he's a riglar hardened ruffian,—sarve him right if they hang him; I'd run up sitch fellows like inions, twenty on a row. It's lucky Lord Atherley sent to London for the Bow-street authorities, he'd have had the whole premereses burnt if he hadn't; it's a put up affair. I'll catch the other two afore to-morrow night, or my name ar'nt Dannel Gribble."

During this harangue the worthy constables, headed by the steward, were labouring, with considerable difficulty, up a steep narrow flight of stairs, of which they gained the summit at the same moment Mr. Gribble's speech came to a termination. Throwing open a door immediately in front of them, the prisoner was ushered into a small and feebly-lighted room. Though nearly devoid of furniture, a large fire which blazed upon the hearth diffused an air of comfort; while a couple of chairs, and a table well supplied with jugs of home-brew

pipes, and tobacco, showed that the constabulary had taken provident care that their "creature comforts" should not be neglected. Mr. Gribble having secured the door took his colleague aside, and after a few minutes' private conversation, in which the words "riglar trump! quite the right sort!" escaped his lips, returned to the table; and after requesting the gemman would take one of the arm-chairs and make himself at home, quietly seated himself in the other, lit his pipe, and making a sign to Mr. Cocksedge to take possession of a wooden coal-box, and do the same,—the two worthies

——— "Undisturbed by state affairs,  
Moistened their clay, and puffed away their cares,"

until they both fell off in a sound sleep. There,—wishing them "rosy dreams and slumbers light," will we leave them, and return to our persecuted hero, who, weary and drowsy the day's fatigue, soon dropped quietly

to sleep in the comfortable arm-chair in which he had ensconced himself. He was no sooner in the arms of Morpheus than

“ Dreams which mock the close-shut eye ”

visited him; he dreamed of Diana,—Gretna Green,—the blacksmith; “ a change came o’er the spirit of his dream; ” he heard the cry of fire;—the building crackled,—the scared visitors ran from room to room. “ Seize the incendiary ! ” was the cry ; “ Swing ! Swing ! ” the harpies of the law followed him,—he became daring, — desperate; they near him,—they grappled him by the collar. “ Knock him on the head ! ” shouted one. “ Kill him ! ” cried another: down they all came together—horror upon horror accumulated ! the earth opened, — a loud rumbling noise was heard, and at this moment the great Gustavus gave a start, a yawn, a shiver, rubbed his eyes, collected his scattered senses, looked round the room, and found all had been delusion — a dream.

The guardians of the night still slept, and apparently profoundly. The denseness of the atmosphere of the low-roofed room, the fumes of the tobacco, were so offensive and overpowering, that the Ensign, feverish and excited, rose hastily, and threw open the casement window. The noise of this movement awoke the vigilance of Mr. Gribble: —

“What, trying to escape! Here ’s a riglar cracksman,” said the vigilant sleeper, starting up, and seizing the prisoner by the throat. “Here, Cocksedge! Cocksedge!”

The Ensign assured him that he had no intention of attempting to escape, (the window, we must here remark, was at least eighty feet from the ground,) and, placing another guinea into his hand, thanked him for his night’s lodging.

“Vy, your honour,” said Gribble, pocketing the money (for even Bow-street officers are, or rather were, *not* immaculate, and are or were great worshippers at the shrine of Mammon);

ve halways vishes to hact like gentlemen *towards* gentlemen who hact as sitch; 'andsome is as andsome does,' is our motto."

The tread of a heavy foot upon the stairs gave symptoms of the approach of some new comer, and in a moment more, after a loud knocking, the door was thrown violently open, and in stalked no less a person than Mr. Springett himself, with a request that the prisoner might immediately be brought before Lord Atherley, in his own room. This put an end to all further conversation.

The prisoner now requested a few words of private conversation with the noble owner of Compton Audley, which was granted. He then gave so open and ingenuous a statement of the whole transaction, that commiseration, a little tinged with mirth, was felt for the hunted warrior, who had been so carefully *attic'd*, so attentively "cabinned, cribbed, confined." Our hero's regiment was shortly afterwards ordered to India, where he escaped all the



horrors of that pestilential clime, and may, for what we know to the contrary, be seen daily, about three o'clock, enjoying a tiffin at the great nabobery in Hanover Square.

The above affair would have remained as secret as the grave, had it not been for the post-boy, who, getting extremely impatient at his waiting job, made enquiries at the house for Ensign Battersby. No such person was at the ball. This led to an inquiry; one question followed another, until a small bundle, which, like the Hon. Mr. Dowlas's luggage, was tied up in the honourable lady's pocket-handkerchief, and a pair of cloth travelling boots, marked "Diana St. Leger," gave a clue to the party.

From that time the wags of the county never omitted an opportunity of indulging their mirth at the fair spinster's expense. We must say, considering the ferocity of fire and the severities of water, she had a right "to tax the elements with unkindness!"

Miss St. Leger, however, bore her disappointment with becoming fortitude; fortunately her feelings had not been very deeply touched; and, happily for her, she possessed that species of *heart* not very uncommon, and described in the couplet:—

“ Indeed, to take our haberdasher’s hints,  
You might have written over it ‘ From Flint’s.’ ”

## CHAPTER IV.

## HIGHBURY CROSS FAIR.

“ ’Tis fair time,—aye, and more than that.”

BLOOMFIELD.

“ Lords, ladies, knights, and damsels, \*gent,  
Were heaped together with the vulgar sort  
And mingled with the raskall rablement,  
Without respect of person or of port.”

SPENSER.

FEW country towns of any eminence were at this period without their annual fair ; and that of Highbury Cross ranked as one of no mean or unimportant order. The aristocracy of the country,—the squire and his family,—the far-

\* *Gent.*—Courteous or free, noble.—*Glossary to Spenser's Poems.*

mers with their wives, sweethearts, sons and daughters; the cottagers all in their holiday array, flocked to this annual meeting or mart, to buy, to sell, or see. It was a period to which the rural people looked forward as one of relaxation from servitude and of mutual rejoicing. It was a time for the exchange of hospitalities, for cultivating the kindest affections, cementing family ties, renewing simple friendships, and disposing of stock! The hearts of the old, of the parents and grandparents, were warmed by retracing "the light of other days," looking forward to seeing their children and grand-children "hearty and well." To the young it was a time devoted to pleasure-taking, present-making, flirtation, and youthful pastime. True indeed was this country scene; the village bells were ringing, and troops of youths and maidens, dressed in their Sunday gear, crowded together; simple and glad creatures! A spirit of delight was diffused over this rural holiday; dances on the green, wrestling, run-

ning and leaping, quoits, skittles, nine-pins, cricket, had usurped the place of the savage and brutal sports of boxing, bull-baiting, bear-baiting, dog-fighting, and cock-fighting. And what a contrast was this unalloyed scene of rural and peaceful enjoyment, to that brutal debasement of human nature so often exhibited in the riot and drunkenness of an English fair.

The spirit of the times is however changed. The once merry mart has now dwindled into an idle, unmeaning, squabbling village holiday ; politics and beer-shops swallow up the hours formerly devoted to English sports and pastimes ; and the sun goes down upon strife and every species of dissipation ! The numerous tippling houses that have sprung up under the New Beer Bill, have done more injury to the morals of the people than any other legislative measure that has passed the Houses of Parliament for the last hundred years. The measure has introduced to active life all the evils of licensed public-houses, without having the check of the

magistracy; the temptations of drink to the poor man have been multiplied,—their baneful tendency has been deeply felt by the wives and children of labourers, who know that they abstract that portion of the wages that ought to go to the maintenance of the family. The principal argument in favour of the Bill was, that the proprietors of the new beer-shops would brew their own beer and produce a wholesome and cheap beverage. But what are the facts in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, nay, in nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand; the liquor, wretched in its first state, is supplied by the brewer who started the house, and by the pauper landlord, and afterwards adulterated by the retailer. With no wish to diminish the real comforts of the labouring classes, or to deprive them of a wholesome beverage, still less to drive them to become the victims of the foul propensity of drinking ardent spirits, we must protest against the introduction of the new private class of alehouses.

A learned judge from the bench, had said, "that he really believed that half the crimes which had been committed since the establishment of the beer-shops, had their origin *in* them." Let any but enter one, and see how often the notice outside, "licensed to be *drunk* on the premises," is practically illustrated within.

We have digressed (a fault we have had but too often to admit); we now resume the thread of our narrative. Rumour, with her many-hundred tongues, had penetrated into the recesses of Compton Audley. It spoke of Lady Atherley's fatal charms,—of the misery of her domestic life,—of Dudley Ravensworth's devotion—of a mysterious disappearance from a hunting field; at first this latter affair appeared to have little effect upon Lord Atherley, but the dropping of water wears decay in stones (the proverb is somewhat musty), and his ears were continually assailed with it. It was on the morning of the mart that Lord Atherley, suffering under slight symptoms of a

fit of gout which rendered him somewhat irritable, appeared late at the breakfast-table. “What, no letters? no papers?” exclaimed he testily; at the very moment the servant brought in the post-bag, and placed it before him. With much importance he proceeded to distribute the letters according to their directions. “Humph! humph!” said Lord Atherley, “more petitions, more begging letters,—but what’s this?” said he, as he turned over a dirty, mis-shapen, queerly-folded letter, written in a very crooked small-hand, and with a noble disdain of orthography, sealed with a lump of wax, impressed with the royal arms—the application of what is termed the tail of a sixpence. It was an anonymous letter, not over flattering to his feelings, and ridiculing his *blindness* with respect to the conduct of his wife.

It was impossible to have found a more fit moment to revive Lord Atherley’s suspicions of his wife than the present; for, although hus-



bands are notoriously the last who become aware of ill-natured reports respecting their wives, he had, on the last day's hunting, found himself the object of the remarks of his country neighbours. Throwing the hateful letter into the fire, fixing his eyes upon Lady Atherley, and bursting into a loud convulsive laugh, he tried to distract his thoughts by looking over the county paper, but here he was, alas! equally unfortunate.

“Hum! hum!” said his Lordship, running his eye over the columns of the paper, “‘Elopement in High Life,’ we ’ll keep that for a *bonne bouche*. Let ’s see, funds at ninety-seven. Police news,—contested mayoralty,—fashionable arrivals,—Dutch papers,—horrid murder,—shocking suicide,—accident at sea,—marriage in high life,—deaths,—poor Lady Johnson’s dead!—London Gazette,—Lord Norbury’s last—theatrical intelligence,—soothing sirup; Well, well.”

“But the elopement?” lisped Priddie. A

twinge made the noble Lord throw down the paper, when Priddie took it up, and read the following paragraphs :

“ELOPEMENT IN HIGH LIFE.

“AN elopement has taken place ; the parties are the lady of a rich nobleman, residing not a hundred miles from C—— A——, and the second son of a baronet, M.P. for the borough of R—t——gh. One rumour states that the lady escaped in male attire, and that the guilty pair are on the road to the Continent ; another, that a duel has taken place, in which the injured husband has been severely wounded. Though we possess ample particulars of this painful transaction, delicacy forbids us to say more at present ; and we abstain from entering fully into it, as the affair will doubtless become a subject of judicial inquiry, and furnish employment for the gentlemen of the long robe.”

## “DISTRESSING OCCURRENCE IN HIGH LIFE.

“AN unexpected event of a peculiarly painful description, has recently occurred, which has created a great sensation in this and the adjoining county; and, as contradictory rumours are afloat, we should think ourselves wanting in our duty to our readers, if we were not to lay before them the authentic facts of the case. The parties are a nobleman of sporting and gastronomic celebrity, his lady, and an honourable M.P. The extraordinary attractions of Lady A——, her unrivalled grace, the sweetness of her manner, have often been the theme of admiration in the county, in the gaieties of which she often partook. The friends of the parties had been for some time apprehensive that the harmony of their domestic intercourse was not uninterrupted. No idea, however, had been formed of the extent of the estrangement, until last Wednesday.

On that day Lord A——, on his return from hunting, was informed, that his lady, who had also partaken of that diversion in the society of the honourable senator, had not yet reached home; but no idea was entertained of the real nature of her absence, until her Ladyship's horses came back into the stable-yard. It proved upon inquiry, that Lady A—— had left the hunting field with D—— R—— Esq., and had been observed at the door of the Dun Cow, Highbury Cross.

“We add with the deepest pain, that, judging from the accounts that have reached us, there is but too much reason to fear, that all attempts to effect a reconciliation will prove unavailing.”

Lady Atherley turned deadly white, lividly white. Lord Atherley, with a bitter smile, soliloquised nearly as follows:—“Liberty of the press!—liberty of the subject! The rascal! I'll exterminate the wretch; I'll lose no

time in seeing Ferretson; action! damages!" An awful silence ensued, which was interrupted by the butler entering to inquire whether the carriages and horses were to come round. "Oh yes; in half an hour," replied Lord Atherley. "I must see Ferretson; besides, we must not stay away from the fair. No, no,—colour to the report, colour to the report. Dudley, I'll take you in the phaeton." Ravensworth pleaded letter-writing, but was overruled.

"You must come! — must come — must come!"

As soon as the carriages were ready the party issued forth; and, after traversing the country very ostentatiously for about five miles, reached the town of Highbury Cross. The fair was at its full. Leaving their equipages at the Bell and Crown they proceeded to the market-place, which was one dense mass of moving people, and unintermitting noise and din—gongs sounding, cymbals clashing, men

bawling, women screaming, children shrieking. We will not attempt to particularise the bustle or humours of it. There were the usual number of dwarfs and giants, and other prodigies and wonders. Wombwell's Menagerie of "undomitable, untameable animals," and Scowton's Company of comedians. Booths for jugglers, prize-fighters, cudgel-players, back-sword, wild beasts, Barcelona nuts, mountebanks, swings. Then there were donkey-racing, dice-tables, up-and-downs, merry-go-rounds, grinning through horse-collars for hats, hunting pigs with soaped tails, wheelbarrow-races blindfolded, running for linen, juvenile gastronomers eating toast and treacle, their hands tied behind them, eel-divers, scalding hasty-pudding eaters, climbing slimy poles, lotteries—all prizes and no blanks, shying at pincushions and snuff-boxes. Booths with toys in the shape of carts, trumpets, drums, dolls, picture-books, lace, lollipops abounded; all kinds of trampers, strollers, beggars, gipsies, singers, dancers.

One man, opulent in a loud stentorian voice, seemed to attract the attention of all the gaping multitude. "All for one halfpenny: a full, true, and perticklar account of the late he-lopement of Lady Ha—— with Mr. R——, the hindependent member for the town of R——h, with portraits of the habove, and a full-length likeness of the disconsolate *usband*. Vere's the lady or gentleman vot would be without sitch a work if they can get it for a a'penny." Amidst the din and clamour, Lord Atherley providentially did not get at the nature of the peripatetic bookseller's publication, but as the crowd drew back "to make room for the quality," his eyes caught the placard. However unartistical the execution of the portraits might be, there could be no mistaking their application, for underneath were printed in large red letters—"Crim. Con. D—— R——, Esq., M. P., and Lady A——. Damages laid at two thousand pounds. All the correspondence!" Lord Atherley shrank back

without the crowd, and within himself, like a paralysed and lightning-struck man. At that moment a woman, dressed forth in all the vulgar and outrageous finery of a strolling actress or a maniac, made her way to the wretched Lord.

“How d’ye like that—how d’ye like that, old man? I told you Sarah Speers was not to be put upon by the like of you. How aches your forehead; there’s not a deer in your fair park better antlered,” suiting the action to the word, putting her fingers in the most decidedly *cornute* shape, and retiring, gibing and mocking, amidst the laughter and shouting of the amused multitude. To apply a passage in Dante’s beautiful episode of Genevra—

“—— I the *fair* that day,  
They read no more.”



## CHAPTER V.

## RETURN TO LONDON.

“ Les personnes qui vont là pour voir sont bien moins nombreuses que celles qui vont pour être vues.”

*L'hermite de la Chaussée D'Antin.*

THE country was no longer endurable to Lord Atherley, it had also lost all charms for Constance; and sudden was the departure of the disturbed pair for town, the only place in which scandal has an insufficiency of space, and where the excitement of life prevents its rumours from lingering long on the memory. Ravensworth was in London within a very few days after the arrival of the Atherleys, and was almost immediately in the receipt of a cold, moody, and formal note from Lord

Atherley, intimating a decided wish that the calls of Dudley should cease. The cherished intimacy of years must henceforth be broken up; and Dudley and Constance must endeavour to pass each other in the varying scenes of a London life, with all the iced serenity of fashionable acquaintance. The following evening, as Ravensworth sat enjoying the rare pleasure of solitude in his opera-box,—which was usually crowded with that large class of the community, who are called, *par excellence*, “young men about town,” and who amidst the most divine strains keep up a running accompaniment of the gossip of the day, he was startled by the entrance of the Honourable Augustus Priddie.

“Anything new to-night?” he demanded, after the usual forms of civility and apologies for intruding had been gone through.

“Nothing that I am aware of,” replied Dudley.

“I dined at White’s,” lisped the exquisite.

“ Brummel was to have dined there, but he threw it over :” then shrugging his shoulders, and staring round the house, added “ Why there is positively *nobody* here to-night !”

Ravensworth turned his attention to the stage: at that moment the house, a crowded one, was hushed to silence, to listen to that splendid scene of Pasta in Semiramide ; those wonderful powers that blended the most exquisite tones of melody with the fiercest agitations of passion,—and which delighted the ears, as they shook the very soul of the listeners. Abruptly, in the midst of one of the most thrilling passages, Priddie quietly asked “ Whether he had seen the Atherleys lately ?” Dudley paused for a moment ere he ventured to reply. “ Lady Atherley has been unwell ; Atherley has lent his box for the remainder of the season,” was his tardy answer.

“ How strange !” replied Priddie ; “ ’pon my soul that Atherley’s an odd fellow, for he told me in the park he was coming ; take a pinch,

its Brummel's best," offering a richly-chased snuff-box.

"Thank you, no!" replied Ravensworth, with a short dry cough.

"Of course you dine with Atherley on the 10th?"

"No, I'm engaged to the Sullivans."

"The Sullivans! oh *Cielo!*" cried Priddie with an air of the most ineffable disgust; "how can you encounter those Irish stews? cold soup, hot wine, only sherry and port; port, decoction of log-wood, cochineal, and spirits of wine,—why your hostess will talk you into a fever in five minutes."

Ravensworth paid no attention to these remarks; his opera-glass was fixed upon the opposite box, which Lord and Lady Atherley and Mr. Darval had just entered. "How exquisitely Pasta sings to-night."

"Very!" was Dudley's laconic answer. And with that pertinacity with which genuine bores always bestow their tedious remarks, especially

at moments when most unwelcome, the unabashed exquisite continued ; “ Ah, how *insouciant* William Ferrers looks with *la belle* Caroline ! only think, Sidney appearing *en evidence* with St. Ange ; how handsome Lady Atherley is looking ! ” fixing his eyes on the opposite box, “ and how wonderfully well Darval is getting on with her ; he is a man to be envied ! I thought she would be here,—what an accommodating *sposo* she has ; he is leaving the box, whilst the lady, nothing loth, permits the *inamorato* to hang over her chair ! ”

Dudley’s attention thus directed to the spot, he fancied that, after Lord Atherley’s departure, Darval paid additional attention to Lady Atherley ; he saw too plainly that he was at the back of her chair ; he saw her apparently engrossing his attention.

“ What a wonderful flow of conversation Darval has ! he comes, he sees, he conquers. ‘ Ven. Vid. Vi. ’ as the short-hand of the commentary gentleman has it. Are you going to

Lady Hatton's to-night?" inquired Priddie; "but I forgot, you are not a ball man."

There was a temporary pause, which was broken by Priddie exclaiming, "'Pon honour, Lady Atherley has changed her seat; ah! the coquette!" Ravensworth, nettled and irritated by the flippancy of his companion, could no longer support his society; he rose and abruptly quitted the box.

"Jealous of Darval, 'pon my sewl!" said Priddie, quietly seating himself in Ravensworth's place. Dudley took his station in the pit. Lady Atherley had now resumed her seat in the front, and appeared all animation! all glasses were directed towards her presence; a crowd of silly idlers stared at her; three or four loungers entered the box, to all Lady Atherley dispensed smiles. Little did Dudley know her feelings: she had retired when she found herself immediately opposite to him; she felt it necessary to conceal her tears, to appear with a smiling countenance, to feign

a cheerfulness and placidity when her heart was distracted; to rush into society when solitude would have been her solace! The group of *roués* around Ravensworth now proceeded to canvass the gay assemblage with a freedom revolting to his ears. The opera was at length over; then came the delights of the crush-room, where a mob of fashionable company assemble twice a week to enjoy the pleasure of being nearly squeezed to death,—of inhaling the odours of expiring lamps and Macassar oil.

Amid the endless din of “Lady Throgmorton’s carriage stops the way!” “Lady Kinrara’s servant gone for the carriage!” “Duke of Stavordale’s carriage,” “Lord Finsbury coming down”—“Prince Brugnioli’s must drive off!”—*there* may be seen old and young ladies, trying to inveigle some man to take them to their carriages; while a few flirtations are going on under the very nose of the unfortunate chaperon, who, nearly worn out in the service, sinks into a sofa, ready to expire with the

heat and bustle. A few fashionables are lisping "How hot it is! what a bear-garden! was not the singing divine? where have you buried yourself? what a perfect opera!" and similar profound and interesting remarks and queries form the usual *macedoine* of London small-talk.

From the delights of the interior let us proceed to the *agrémens* of the exterior. It was a wet night — a London coachmaker's delight; the violence of the coachmen, the whipping of the oil-skin hooded horses, the oaths of the footmen, the hallooing of the link-boys, the shouts of the police, or, as the brilliant Luttrell describes it,

" Amidst the din  
Of drunken coachmen *cutting* in,  
Loud are the sounds of swearing, lashing,  
Of tangled wheels together clashing,  
Of glasses shivering, panels crashing,  
As thus they try their civil forces  
In whips and carriages and horses."

Dudley entered the crush-room; in a re-



mote corner sat Lady Atherley in discourse with Darval, whose eyes were fixed most admiringly upon her; and though Dudley saw enough to leave no doubt upon his mind that Darval was an infatuated admirer, he could not charge her with bestowing the slightest encouragement on him.

As Ravensworth was proceeding towards the spot where the Atherley party were seated, determined within himself, if possible, to seek some explanation, he found himself suddenly plucked by the sleeve by Mrs. Sullivan.

“My dear Mr. Ravensworth, I am delighted to see you, do pray come to my assistance; Sullivan has just gone for the carriage, and we shall be crushed to death. Allow me to introduce my niece, Miss Dunlary.” During these remarks Mrs. Sullivan took Ravensworth’s arm, and requested her *protégée* to do the same. Anxious as he was to get away, he found it quite impossible, and he was therefore doomed to listen, for

the hundredth time, to Mrs. Sullivan's description of her villa in the Vale of Ovoca, the beauty of the meeting of the waters, and the legend of St. Kevin.

Ravensworth bowed and smiled most complacently, occasionally giving an affirmative movement of the head; and, ascertaining that his position commanded a view of the Atherleys, he was content to listen to, at least to *seem* to listen to, and admire the account of the beauties of the "County Wicklow."

From his fit of abstraction he was recalled by Mrs. Sullivan's vehement address, "If ever Mr. Ravensworth you visit the Emerald Isle, it will give Sullivan and myself the greatest pleasure to see you at Ovoca Villa:—in the summer, pic-nics and boating-parties to the lakes,—and the seven churches; and in the winter there is splendid shooting."

"I shall be very happy;" replied Dudley, his thoughts still wandering.

"Then I shall look upon it as a promise;

and really the vale and the meeting of the——” At the moment a stentorian voice announced, “Lady Atherley’s carriage stops the way!” Dudley rose in the middle of Mrs. Sullivan’s harangue,—the Atherleys were moving; apologising to the astonished lady at leaving her so abruptly, and promising to return, he proceeded towards Lady Atherley. He was about to approach her,—at least to inquire after her health, but though clear of Scylla he did not escape Charybdis.

“Dudley, my dear fellow,” exclaimed Sullivan, “what have you done with my ladies?”

Ravensworth cast a hurried glance towards the spot where he had left them, and muttered out an explanatory apology. “Lady Atherley’s carriage must drive on!” was shouted.

“Come, Constance!” panted Lord Atherley, “we must not keep the horses, *dear*; and Count Sternhauld has asked me to supper,—take my arm.” Before Ravensworth could approach her, Lord Atherley had hurried her

into the carriage, — “Home !” cried the footman ; and, meteor like, away flashed the chariot and was soon out of sight.

Baffled and dispirited, Ravensworth left the Opera-house ; he reflected on the events of the evening, all was “as a phantasma and a hideous dream ;” her name had been coupled with Darval’s ! Every tongue was busy in its condemnation ; she was looked upon as an easy prey of every coxcomb—as a coquette ; she appeared to merit the censure ; but all this rested on the testimony of the *babillard* Priddie, and the empty accusations of the boasting creatures to whom he had been listening. Dudley was determined to satisfy his misgivings : he would write to Constance, he would leave no means untried to arrive at the truth. Constance must not be sacrificed to the heartlessness of an accomplished *roué* ; at all risks, at all desperate hazards, he would generously warn if he could not happily save her.

Day after day, Constance solaced herself by

the feeling that she was acting honourably towards Ravensworth, and uprightly towards her husband; nevertheless, her affection sank deep in her heart, and her care-worn countenance betrayed the conflict within her. Had Lord Atherley treated her with gentleness and confidence, he might have regained his influence over her, for Constance's disposition was peculiarly alive to kindness; but, unfortunately, he adopted a harsh and morose line of conduct towards her, and she became daily more averse to his control and the encumbrance of his attentions.

Ravensworth determined to leave London, the scene of ruinous enchantment; to tear himself away, and try whether absence would not cure the passion which, during the last few days, had been so rapidly increasing. Painful as it would be, he felt it would be the wisest plan to leave England; conscience, too, whispered that it would be right to others. There was a struggle—a deep and severe one;—but

alas ! it did not end in triumph. The temptation was too strong ! He could not summon courage to fly from her presence : his was a feverish state of existence. He had endeavoured to stifle “ the still small voice,” which every now and then would struggle to be heard ; at length his heart was so completely wound up in her, that he felt he had no longer the power to dissolve the spell which charmed him to her presence. He had found the execution of good resolutions far more difficult than he imagined ; he discovered that he could not forget Constance, — that he loved her more than he dared own to himself ; that his love was grown irradicably in his bosom, a part of his existence that could end only with his being. Unfortunately, all good resolutions failed, and he found that he was daily employed in adding but another stone to that pavement which is said to be composed of “ good intentions,” and with which the dominion of the lost is paved !

In the solitude of her home, Constance also

resolved to make a vigorous effort to break the chain that bound her; she felt that an unhallowed passion had been suffered to gain strength in her breast, and that she had placed herself on a precipice no virtuous woman should hazard approaching. She determined not to permit herself to remain where she was daily encouraging, though tacitly, a passion that would sully the purity of her mind for ever; and with an ardent desire to atone for her past transgression, she decided on leaving the dangerous presence of Ravensworth, and quitting a scene where passion was at perpetual war with principle.

Late as it was, she sought Lord Atherley, who, having a variety of dinner engagements, was delighted at the contemplated absence of his lady, especially as he felt assured the House would detain Dudley in town. His consent obtained, before nine o'clock on the following Thursday Lady Atherley was on her road to Leamington!—one motive had induced Lady Atherley to select Leamington;

her early friend and cousin, Mary Cressingham, resided there, and in her society she hoped to find a balm for her troubled spirit.



## CHAPTER VI.

## JOURNEY TO BRICKHILL.

———“ Love should be pure,  
Harmless as pilgrims' kisses on the shrines  
Of virgin martyrs ; holy as the thoughts  
Of dying saints, when angels hover o'er them ;  
Harmonious, gentle, soft : such love should be,  
The zephyr — not the whirlwind of the soul.”

CUMBERLAND.

A FEW mornings after the event which we have recorded in the last chapter the following conversation took place between Dudley and his faithful valet, Monsieur Jean Jacques Hippolite Dubrè.

“ Avez-vous laissé les livres chez Lady Atherley ? ”

“ Oui, Monsieur, je les ai remis moi-même.

Madame allait partir pour Warwickshire, et tandis que j'étais là on préparait la voiture pour le voyage."

"Impossible !" said Dudley.

The intelligent Jean Jacques continued, "Madame Viney m'a dit que mi lady ne se portait pas très-bien ; qu'elle passerait la nuit à Daventry, et qu'elle arriverait le lendemain à Leamington."

Dudley turned this information over in his mind : he had heard rumours of a separation between Lord and Lady Atherley ; he felt he was the innocent cause of it.

"And can I desert her in the hour of trial ?" He rang his bell impatiently, "Send John White here." He paced the room for some minutes, when he was disturbed by a knock at the door.

"Come in. Oh, White ! I shall want the britchka as soon as it can be brought round."

Monsieur Dubré again appeared. "Comme il faut que j'aille à Northampton, d'où je re-

viendrai demain, emballez mes effets, et n'y mettez que le strict nécessaire ;” said Ravensworth.

“ Oui, Monsieur.”

“ Vous ne m’y accompagnerez pas.”

In less than half an hour Ravensworth was being whirled along as fast as four post-horses could take him towards Barnet. Reaching the inn, where

“ High in the street, o’erlooking all the place,  
The rampant Lion shows his kingly face,—”

the obliging landlord was at the door ; half a dozen waiters rushed from the house, the ostler’s bell rang ; “ first and second turnout ;” in a minute the horses were put to.

“ All right ! pay back,” said the ostler, doffing his fur cap ; “ make the best of your way.”

Nothing occurred worthy of mention until Ravensworth stopped at Dunstable, famous for straw bonnets and lasses, larks (we mean birds), and immortalised in theatrical history as the spot

where “Cæsar Sylvester Dionysius Daggerwood first acted to a brilliant and overflowing *barn*—house I mean.” He determined to leave his carriage there, to prevent the possibility of its being discovered by Lady Atherley’s servants. Whilst framing an excuse, he entered the town; it was market-day, a crowd had assembled round the principal inn.

Dudley began to experience that pang of “conscience which makes cowards of us all;” his carriage stopped.

“Please to alight, sir?”

“Yes, show me to a private room.” He alighted, and as he entered he fancied he was recognised; he had an indistinct impression that he heard his own name mentioned, coupled with that of Ratborough. His doubts were soon proved not to be groundless, by the entrance of the waiter with two undirected covers in his hand.

“Please, sir, master would feel greatly

obliged by your franking these letters." Dudley took up a pen.

"Pray say, I wish to speak one word with your master."

The waiter retired, and "mine host" appeared.

"Beg pardon, sir, beg pardon, but is not your name Ravensworth?"

"It is," replied Dudley; "but who are you, my friend?"

"Beg your pardon, sir, for the liberty; but I am William, head-waiter, that is, as was head-waiter at the Royal Hotel, St. James's Street; saved a little money, sir, come here to set up for myself."

"Well, I wish you success, William,—I have franked your letters; but as business of a private nature has brought me from town, and as I am obliged to be absent from the House to-night, I wish no mention of my name to be made — you understand?"

The landlord *did understand*: for no sooner had he left Ravensworth's presence than he told a few particular friends the circumstance, adding that he was quite sure "there was something more than met the eye."

The ostler was now summoned, and Ravensworth ordered a chaise and pair, stammering out some excuse about the wheels of his carriage being shaken, and requesting it might be sent to the coach-maker and be ready for him in the morning.

"A chaise and pair, I believe you said, sir?" replied the man of oats, laying great stress on "pair."

"I did," said Dudley, "lose no time;" slipping a half-crown into his hand. In less than a minute, the obsequious waiter re-appeared.—"Chay's at the door, sir."

Dudley entered the crazy yellow sedan, on different coloured wheels, where for the remainder of the journey he enjoyed all its luxuries—jingling windows, broken panes, mildewed

lining, moth-eaten cushions, rattling steps, and rumbling wheels; there was stubble too at his feet enough to hold a covey of partridges. Muffling himself up in his cloak, and wrapping a huge hunting shawl round his neck, he eventually reached the Saracen's Head, Daventry, the most pleasant of all country inns, and the landlady appeared. He now felt that he must descend to deception.

“Is there a surgeon in the town?” asked Dudley.

“A most clever young man!” responded the hostess, with an air of conscious pride; “my nephew, sir.”

“Pray send and desire him to let me have some tincture or lotion; I have a most excruciating toothache.”

“Poor gentleman!” replied the landlady, “my dear departed husband was a victim to it; he always applied a poultice of laudanum and camomile flowers: let me make you one, sir?”

Dudley assented, ordering a light dinner at seven o'clock ; and requesting the loan of any books his kind-hearted hostess could spare, he begged he might not be disturbed. The hours passed tediously on ; the noise of every carriage or coach that stopped startled him. A gentle knock at the door announced the arrival of the books—the Ladies' Magazine for 1778, the Farmer's Calendar, an odd volume of Taplin's Farriery, and a liberal moiety of the fourth volume of Pamela.

Seven o'clock arrived—Dudley's anxiety increased : could Lady Atherley's plans have been changed ? Another hour passed—he heard the noise of wheels. He looked through the Venetian blinds ; a green chariot stopped, the bells rang, the servants descended from the rumble, the door of the carriage was opened, and Lady Atherley alighted.

“ This way, my Lady. There's a step, my Lady.”

Dudley turned from the window ; he heard



Mrs. Viney enquire for *the parlour*. The door of his room was opened and as immediately closed, as the landlady said—

“That apartment is occupied. A poor gentleman with a most dreadful toothache—he could not touch a morsel of dinner.”

We will not attempt to describe the state of nervous anxiety Dudley remained in as he paced his apartment. Every step upon the stairs caught his ear; every voice in the passage made him pause and listen. Occasionally he experienced a keen sense of remorse, as he thought of the danger to which he was exposing his beloved Constance. With admirable sophistry he, however, “laid the flattering unction to his soul,” that he was acting a brother’s part in giving her this negative protection and warning her against Darval!

The landlady now entered the room, laden with tinctures and lotions and potent drugs and draughts, enough to have kept a regiment, of four hundred strong, in health for half

a year, on the modern homœopathic system, —a system which is described as one which would induce its practitioners to throw a handful of Epsom salts into the lake of Geneva, to make saline draughts.

Nine o'clock arrived. Enfolding himself in his cloak, Dudley cautiously left his room and paused for a moment at the door of Constance's apartment. He gave a gentle knock; a faint "Come in" was the reply. The door opened; her face rested upon her hand and was turned away, but there was a sadness in her very attitude, and she was so abstracted that she did not hear the sound of a footstep. At length she raised her eyes from a letter she was writing. Dudley stood before her.

"Oh God!" she exclaimed, burying her face in her hands, "leave me."

"Not till I see you better," said he, in an agitated voice.

"For heaven's sake, leave me!" she con-

tinued, " I shall soon be calmer ; I will then speak to you ; now I cannot."

Uncertain what to do or say, Ravensworth walked disturbed up and down the room in silence. At length, hastily coming up to her—" My dearest Lady Atherley !"—he exclaimed.

" Oh Dudley !" said Constance in a low voice, " is this your promise ? "

" Believe me," replied Dudley, " I struggled long with my feelings, but——"

" For my sake—for your sake," interrupted Constance, struggling with her tears and clasping her hands in an agony of grief and remorse, " leave me."

" Constance," he said, in a low soft tone, " Constance ! look up—look up, and hear me : you are silent—speak. You were once kind to me ; you have now my very existence in your hands ; one word, and I am the——"

Constance averted her eyes, and in a firm voice said—

“If you are the Ravensworth I knew, leave me! — go, Dudley.”

“Stay, Constance, stay!” cried Dudley, as he caught hold of her nervously shaking hand; “one word more, and I will leave you. Say that you—that you love me.”

“Be certain,” said she, in a voice that betrayed the deepest emotion, “it is better to esteem fully, or regard kindly, than to love fully.”

This conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a waiter, who bustled about, jingled the glasses, clattered the knives, dusted the table with his napkin, and retired, like a half relieved surveyor.

“Dudley Ravensworth,” continued Constance, “we may never meet again. If ever you—” she paused, “felt a friendship for me, save me from ruin; clear my character. God bless you! be still my friend!”

Constance, forcing a faint smile, held out her hand. Dudley seized it with affection, and

pressed it to his throbbing heart. His whole frame shook with the violence of his contending feelings. It was a moment of agitated happiness to one; of misery and reproach to the other. A train of recollections rushed through his mind, and checked the rising of those unholy feelings to which his soul was nearly yielding. He gazed upon her with the ingenuous ardour of early affection. The temptation conquered — trial past, he endeavoured to soothe the troubled spirit of Constance, who, exhausted in mind and frame, sank senseless on the floor.

Ravensworth, horror-struck, was suddenly restored to calmness; he felt the force of his own misconduct in having given unbridled licence to his feelings, and at this moment felt that his very love upbraided him for his selfishness.

Dudley employed himself in restoring Constance to consciousness. He threw open the

window — bathed her temples with eau de Cologne. She recovered slowly.

“May Heaven bless and support you!” said he with earnestness; then kissing her hands fervently, before she was aware of his intention, he hastily quitted the room.

Constance, upon retiring to her apartment, gave herself up to the tumult of her emotions. Her thoughts turned, “in forward and reverted view,” to future prospects and past events; and the crowd of recollections and anticipations, conjured up by memory, rendered her mind a perfect chaos, in which all was undefined except appalling gloom!

Constance, worn out with a harassed mind, and fatigued with her recent conflict, slept to wake unrefreshed; to endure more keenly than ever the grief that had oppressed her. Dudley, lost in his own thoughts, allowed some hours to pass away, unconscious that the morning light would soon dawn. All save himself had long been lost in death’s counterfeit. At length

a deep sense of bodily fatigue aroused him. He threw himself on his bed : the fever and anxiety of his mind denied him the luxury of rest ; he fell into that drowsy state between sleeping and waking, which presents all the fanciful dreams of slumber with an indistinct consciousness of surrounding localities. The clock struck six ; the grey light of the morning was coming in at the windows. Dudley heard the rattling sound of wheels, and rushing to the near window watched with eager eyes the only spot which afforded a view of the road ; throwing it open, he leaned forward only to see the carriage which contained Lady Atherley rolling rapidly away. The keen morning air was in chilling unison with the cold misery of his heart. With the bewildered feeling of one in a feverish dream, he stood listening to the dying sounds of the carriage wheels till they were no longer audible.

We must now return to Lord Atherley, who the moment Lady Atherley left Grosvenor

Square, ordered his horses, to ride to Greenwich, to get an appetite for a white-bait dinner, to which he had been long engaged. To him it was a day of great liberty and relief; no one is more alive to enjoyment than an emancipated husband. It was nearly eight o'clock before the epicures assembled at the "Ship," to enjoy the Apician luxury of eating a fish dinner. Lord Atherley, who was in high humour, was a perfect otter on two legs, and had a twelve-horse eating power,—he was beguiling his time in the aristocratic amusement of throwing halfpence to some ragged, dirty, bare-legged urchins for a scramble in the mud.

"Shall we wait for Lumley?"

"I vote for dinner," replied Lord Atherley, "envertu de cette axiome gastronomique, qu'attendre empêche de manger, et que manger n'empêche pas de venir." This saying had its due weight, and in a few moments the door was thrown open, and the landlord, followed by a host of waiters, proceeded to disencumber them-



selves of certain large dishes of piscatorial dainties.

Lord Atherley was voted unanimously to the chair; the covers were removed, and a dinner worthy the Pope on a *jour maigre*, or which Cardinals during lent might covet, appeared before them. The whole force of culinary science had been developed by the prince of artists, as far as white-bait arrangements are concerned. The president was gloating his eyes on the steaming platters, undecided between the water zuchée of perch, tench, and flounder,—eels, plain, stewed, and spitchcocked,—fried flounders,—salmon, boiled and broiled,—soles,—white-bait, (which some one likens to silkworms in batter,) when an arrival attracted his attention.

“Ah, Lumley!” exclaimed a dozen voices, “better late than never; but how have you escaped the house? has Johnstone postponed his motion? sit next to Atherley,—he will make room.”

“Oh no, Johnstone was on his legs ; replied Lumley, I left him advocating ‘cheap bread, the importation of best Dantzic; free trade, repeal of the corn laws,’—but I was fortunate enough to get a pair. Dudley Ravensworth was called unexpectedly from town.”

“Ravensworth !” said Lord Atherley, who at that moment was helping himself to white-bait, and calling for the brown bread, the lemon, the cayenne, and all the accompaniments that give zest to the Lilliputian fry.

“Yes, Ravensworth ; he must be in love ; it’s the tenth time we have paired this session.—Sure such a pair was never seen.”

It would be impossible to describe Lord Atherley’s feelings during the remainder of the dinner ; he looked, as Mrs. Malaprop would say, like “one of the Derbyshire putrefactions.”

“Why, Atherley, you don’t eat.” “Drink a glass of wine, then.” “Give ‘the dry’ to Lord Atherley.” “Why, old fellow, you’ve lost your appetite ; he ’s a lucky dog that finds it.”

“ Why, Atherley, you ’ve forgotten your own motto, ‘ *lentement et copieusement* ;’ you ’re bolting your dinner like a stage-coach passenger, eating against time ; take a glass of cup with me.” And Lord Atherley did drink, and deeply too.

At an early hour he pleaded indisposition and retired. In a sullen humour he reached his house and entered his room ; his servant brought in lights ; for some time Lord Atherley paced it in moody silence, then turning round asked sharply whether Mr. Ravensworth had called or sent that day ? ”

“ I ’ll enquire, my Lord.”

Left to himself, Lord Atherley began to soliloquise, “ It can’t be ;” he was interrupted by the return of his trusty valet.

“ Mr. Ravensworth has not called, my Lord ; but he sent a packet of books this morning to my Lady ; John was out of the way, and Mr. Dubré gave them to Mrs. Viney.”

A groan escaped the nobleman. “ Call me

at eight o'clock; have the carriage ready at half-past nine."

Before ten o'clock on the following morning Lord Atherley's chariot, with four good horses and two smart postboys, was at the door, and within ten minutes the agitated peer was within it, and proceeding full gallop towards Barnet. We will pass over his journey, which, like all summer journeys, was hot, dusty, and disagreeable, until we bring him to the open door of the far-famed Saracen's Head, Daventry. The carriage stopped, then came *such* a peal at the ostler's bell, and out ran half-a-dozen stable-keepers. The hostess, with her matrons, appeared at the door. If anything could have soothed Lord Atherley's mind it would have been the profound respect paid him by the landlady and her well-organised establishment, as he was ushered into a very comfortable room. "Please to order dinner, my Lord; here's the bill of fare;" which, of course, consisted of the eternal indigenous dishes, "tender mutton chop,

beautiful veal cutlet, and nice rump steak.” Lord Atherley was about to inquire after some fish, when the landlady continued,—“ My Lady left at eight this morning, my Lord.” A suppressed sigh, or rather, a prose groan, escaped him.

“ Was your house full last night ? ” inquired the Peer suspiciously.

“ We had a wedding-party from Bourton, my Lord, and one gentleman from London ;— ” Lord Atherley bit his lips ; —“ A gentleman from London —— ”

This colloquy was put an end to by the entrance of the head chambermaid, Mary Maggs. “ Did you ring, ma’am ? ” demanded the obsequious intruder.

“ No, Maggs ; but stay, do you happen to know the gentleman’s name last night in the blue parlour ? ”

“ Really, ma’am, I did hear ; bless me ! Ra, Ra—, lor’, I shall forget my own name next ! ”

“ Never mind, Mrs. Maggs,” said Lord

Atherley, who had listened in breathless horror and astonishment.

“John Ostler knows; I think he heerd it from the postboy. Mr.—, Mr.—, he’s a M.P. I declare how strange,” muttered the loquacious bed-maker as she left the room, “I never was took so forgetsome since my name was Maggs.”

Now Mrs. Maggs knew perfectly well the name of the gentleman in the blue parlour, but not wishing to be detected in her prying propensities, thought, by first mentioning the circumstance to her second in office, who would naturally mention it through the house, — the “drawer of the bill” might go undiscovered; on the same principle that stolen notes from this country, once placed in the hands of a Rotterdam or Amsterdam *fence*, id est, receiver-general of stolen goods, are so speedily passed on Change, from hand to hand, as to defy detection. Now we are not at all prepared to state that the curiosity of the fair sex is in-

satiable; but as there are exceptions to all general rules, we must be charitable enough to suppose that Mary Maggs was the exception. Undoubtedly she was one of the descendants of Eve who had profited little by her example. No sooner did a mysterious stranger arrive at the Saracen's Head, than Mrs. Maggs commenced her inquisition. Portmanteaus, valises, carpet-bags, dressing-cases, cloaks, umbrellas, and hats, were all inspected in the hopes of finding the owner's name..

In the case we have just alluded to, Ravensworth's *incog.* had speedily been discovered, and, strange to say, by the very means he had adopted to make it more secure; the cloak and shawl in which he had counterfeited the suffering patient, had marks of his identity. In the former, his name appeared in full length: in the latter, his initials. The arrival of Lady Atherley had driven every thought, save of her, out of his mind; and in his temporary absence Mrs. Maggs had just dropped in, and

satisfied her (at least her first parent's) propensities.

Lord Atherley, meanwhile, felt all "the agony, the doubts, the fears," of a jealous, tortured mind. Ringing the bell, the barmaid appeared. "Be kind enough to order the carriage, make out my bill, and send the waiter and chambermaid."

"Yes, my Lord. Horses to Southam?"

"No, no," stammered his Lordship: "to Towcester. I had forgotten some business in London." The discreet Hebe curtsied, and left the room, — then followed a trifling peal of bells.

"Lord Atherley's carriage round,—ticket Towcester. Waiter and chambermaid." — A knock at the door. "Come in."

Mrs. Maggs appeared. "Please to want the chambermaid?"

"Here's half-a-crown for you," said Lord Atherley, in as indifferent a manner as he could command.



“Thank you, my Lord. I find, from John Ostler, the gentleman as slept in No. 7 last night, and who occupied the blue parlour, — was Mr. Ravensworth, M.P. The gentleman, in his hurry, left his shawl behind him;” producing at the same time “the handkerchief.” — Like Othello’s there seemed magic in it, for Lord Atherley muttered, bit his lips, and rushed out of the room. Seizing the bill from the landlady as he passed the bar, he entered his carriage.

“I’ll send the amount by the postboy.”

“Thank you, my Lord,” said the hostess, curtsying.

“Make the best of your way, boys!” cried John Ostler. — The carriage was soon out of sight.

We pass over the journey. Before night Lord Atherley had reached London. Perplexed in the extreme by his now confirmed suspicions, he became wild and ungovernable in his exasperation against his unhappy wife;

and, with a demoniac exultation, caused by rage, disappointment, and jealousy,—jealousy, the most bitter poisonous herb that roots itself in the garden of the mind. He sent for his lawyer, and dictated as much indignation, in the shape of a letter, as he possibly could. He haughtily reminded Lady Atherley, that she had forfeited every virtue of her sex ; he forbade her to return to her home, and desired her to remain at Leamington until he had made arrangements for a separation.

“ Her thoughtlessness may have led her into a thousand follies, but nothing worse, I hope,” said Mr. Cresswell, the kind-hearted man of business.

“ She shall never enter under my roof again !” cried Lord Atherley, frantic with rage. “ She has wronged me !—made me contemptible in my own eyes !—in the eyes of the world ! Stung me !—wounded me to the core by her treachery ! ”

To keep calm the mind of a man under

the influence of jealousy, is no easy task—even for a lawyer ; and the professional man, feeling the impossibility of pacifying his client, respectfully took his leave, but not before he had expressed a hope “ that affairs might take a more favourable turn.”

When Lord Atherley had committed this over-hasty act, he began to find himself—in very truth and spirit—forlorn, desolate ! He was now left to himself in the world. To describe his feelings were impossible : his home had been embittered, first by suspicions, then by dissensions, and now was ruined by guilt ! yet, notwithstanding all the harshness and coarse severity of his character, he was now suffering all that sad weakness of mind which arises from a lingering affection for the object of our former love, mingled with a sense of injury received from that very object : he had banished Constance from his house ; he had lost her for ever ; all was like a dream. A woman so keenly alive to every delicacy and refine-

ment could not surely be the worthless being he had lately pictured to himself. To believe her false—to believe she had deceived him,—was agony intense. He paced the room in a state of stupor, broken in upon by fits of delirious excitement: at one moment all was hatred and excitement, the next was all regret; now fury and indignation raged, and then despondency ensued, which was succeeded by the gnawing torture, the bitter agonising consciousness of self-reproach. The remainder of the day he passed in a state bordering on insanity.

## CHAPTER VII.

## LEAMINGTON.

“ In various talk th’ instructive hours they past,  
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last ;  
One speaks the glory of the British queen,  
And one describes a charming Indian screen ;  
A third interprets motives, looks, and sighs ;  
At every word a reputation dies.  
Snuff, or the fan, supply the place of chat,  
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.”

POPE.

WHILE Lord Atherley was occupied as we have related in the last chapter, a scene was passing elsewhere in which he was involved, and, for the development of which, we must take our readers to Leamington, where Lady Atherley had arrived after a tedious journey,

rendered as uncomfortable as an uneasy mind, heavy roads, and a mizzling rain could make it. Every thing accorded with the gloom of her sick and desponding soul, and she reclined in her carriage in a sort of melancholy stupor, abandoning herself only to the contemplation of the darkest prospects. Leamington at the time of which we write was in its infancy; it aspired only to the pastoral denomination of a village. Some wandering mineralogists having visited it and tasted the waters, pronounced them to be eminently medicinal—a grand specific against every disorder under the sun. In a short time this scarcely peopled hamlet grew, by degrees, to the proud distinction of a populous town. Hotels, pumps, tumblers, sedan chairs, and apothecaries, multiplied in the usual proportion.

Reading-rooms, circulating-libraries, assembly-rooms, theatres, baths, boarding-houses, followed in their train; and it was soon established, that no person of broken consti-

tution could get it riveted without a visit to the Spa. World-sick noblemen, sated and disgusted with artificial luxuries; right honourable hysterical dowagers, suffering from the enervation consequent on a long career of London vigils, with their puling, sickly offspring, tainted with hereditary dissipation, and fevered with late hours and unwholesome diet; *bons vivants* from the West; bad livers (in every sense of the phrase) from the East; gentlemen with drab shorts, yellow waistcoats, and faces "made out of the same piece of cloth;" gouty admirals, now doomed to lead fresh-water lives; jaundiced K. C. B.'s, with powdered heads and pigtails in pristine perfection; Indian nabobs and judges from "Consumah-kutmulgar-chaprasse-sinder-bow-bergee," and other unpronounceable districts, congregated. Smoke-dried children from the manufacturing towns; toiling citizens, emerging from their confined alleys; ancient spinsters, whose heart-burnings no modern Galen had art

enough to cure; in short, the maimed, the halt, the blind, the consumptive, the dyspeptic, the hypochondriac,—all votaries to the shrine of Hygeia, — driven by bile or *bon ton*, swarmed to this popular spot, — this modern Montpellier, to seek heaven's greatest boon, health. All were industriously engaged in making wry faces, and swallowing “potations pottle-deep” of this physical and filthy stream.

It has, however, been left to One to complete this work. By the wand of this medical enchanter, a populous and flourishing town of crescents, paragon, parades, and villas, has risen up; this once quiet village is now alive with the wanderers of every nation. Jostling crowds, angry politics, warring newspapers,—all the vices, jealousies, dissipations, and vexations of a large community, have displaced its former monotony. To Jephson, then, must the prosperity be attributed; his talents need no feeble praise, nor is this the place to speak of him; his memory will be



embalmed in the hearts of all who have profited by his skill; and Leamington will remain a lasting monument to him who has conferred such benefits upon mankind.

Enough, however, of Leamington, as a Spa. Constance meditated on the effect Dudley Ravensworth's rash proceeding would produce upon her husband, should he ever become acquainted with it. She reflected with the greatest anxiety upon the interpretation to which such an incident would in his mind be liable, and, guiltless as she was of giving her sanction to it, she was haunted with the dread of the evil consequences that might result from it. It is true her husband had been too severe with her, and had remonstrated but too coarsely, for his whole nature was rugged and irascible; and though disgusted by such rugged and ungracious conduct, she was scarcely less angry with herself, for having tacitly admitted Ravensworth's renewed and but too marked attention.

Wearied and dispirited Constance threw herself on her bed, hoping to lose, in sleep, the remembrance of the various events of the last two days. But sleep, as the poet says,

“ Still last to come where ’tis desired most,”

shunned her aching eyes. A wakeful night, and the agitation she had experienced, affected the health of Constance so much, that the next morning saw her on a bed of sickness. Mary Cressingham came at an early hour: every one has known the torment of suspense, and felt its lengthening torture. That day and the following one passed in fruitless expectation — no letter from Lord Atherley, although he had promised to communicate his wishes as to her plans; the night in unceasing wakefulness; fearful dreams, the companions of feverish sleep, deprived her of rest. On the third morning a letter was put into Lady Atherley’s hand; it was from Lord Atherley. For some minutes she durst not open it; a strange foreboding filled her mind; she dreaded

the cause of his silence, and now more dreaded the cessation of that silence. At length she broke the seal, but she was not prepared for the contents: as she read them the life-blood chilled around her heart. It would be impossible to describe the sensation produced upon Constance.

After an hour's free indulgence in profound grief, she was startled by a light knock at the door; her whole nerves had been so much shaken, that she had hardly energy enough to exert herself to heed it. At length she roused herself, and the smiling face of Mary Cressingham appeared behind the opening door—all that was kind, affectionate, and attentive was done on *her* part. But all was needed.

Mary was not an uninterested observer of the various expressions that passed over her friend's countenance; but her love for her was so coupled with respect, that for some time she forbore to ask what so evidently and strangely disturbed, nay distracted

her. Mary now leaned an anxious ear to the recital of her distresses.

Constance, speaking through her gathering tears, said, "How shall I tell you,—oh! how *shall* I tell you all that has passed?"

"Speak, dearest Constance," replied Mary; "my friendship has always been yours; it is all I can offer you; confide in me; let me share your troubles."

"Bless you, my more than sister!" exclaimed Constance; "but the blow has been so sudden—so unexpected."

A new idea now darted into Mary's mind, and turning as pale as her friend, she exclaimed,—

"No bad news of Mr. Ravensworth?" for with that penetration which women possess regarding one another, she had long discovered, that, under a veil of gaiety, Lady Atherley had concealed a secret grief; one that, notwithstanding her confidence in her, she had never ventured to reveal.

“ No ! read *this !* ” cried Constance, throwing down the letter before her.

Mary read, and too clearly perceived the magnitude of the evils which encompassed her friend : the blight which had come over her worldly hopes, was apparent ; she saw how vain were all words of consolation ; she looked upon her in speechless sorrow, on one so young, yet so unfortunate ! she strove to lead her thoughts into some more quiet channel, to inspire her with hope. Constance’s swelling heart needed all relief : in Mary’s presence she had restrained her tears, but no sooner had her friend left her, than they burst forth in torrents ! She wept long and bitterly ; and though this effort so far relieved her as to abate the first shock with which she had received the intelligence the letter contained, it left, however, a more settled melancholy upon her : she felt intensely her solitary and sad condition ; she was now spurned by her husband ; Dudley was at a distance ; her

thoughts, in self-condemnation, were daggers to her heart, and all the danger of her situation flashed across her mind. She was stupefied in her every sense; she sat gazing at the letter in inarticulate despair! The past, the present, the future; everything was terrible. Forsaken, unprotected—herself an object of contempt—could fate wear a blacker mask? Heavily passed the day; she took a hasty review of her past conduct, of time neglected, friends estranged, her husband lost to her; of health impaired by ceaseless dissipation: nor did any favourable prospect for the future enliven her dreary contemplation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## SCANDAL.

“ La langue du détracteur est un feu dévorant qui flétrit tout ce qu’il touche ; qui ne laisse partout où il a passé que ruine et désolation ; qui pénètre jusque dans les entrailles de la terre, et va s’attacher aux choses les plus cachées ; qui change en de viles cendres ce qui nous avait paru, il n’y a qu’un moment, si brillant et si précieux ; qui, dans le temps même qu’il paraît éteint, agit avec plus de violence et de danger que jamais, et qui noircit enfin ce qu’il ne peut consumer.”

MASSILLON.

THE world, more especially the Leamington world, was ringing with the “ delicate affair,” as it was called ; the tongue of every gossip was in full activity ; and the minds of the inquisitive and scandal-hunters, were

now convinced of the truth of the prevailing report. The affair had been entrusted “to one or two mutual friends,” who of course went from house to house inoculating their friends with the *virus* of report, under a solemn pledge of secresy ;—thereby procuring a most marvellously rapid diffusion of the disease. So great a phenomenon as a secret kept, could not be expected in Leamington any more than in any other place. Curiosity is unquestionably an overpowering passion in the descendants of Adam and Eve ; for it amounts to a passion ! Despite of the *onus* of their first mother’s first fault, women, we fearlessly aver, are not more under the influence of this spirit than men ; but while we admit this, and freely too, and, moreover, most readily concede to the fair sex the limited power of keeping a secret inviolable, we are rather inclined to believe that the communicating-power of gossip is a *leetle* stronger in females (especially in those of an unmentionable age,) than in the



lords of the creation. What can exceed the eagerness, the bursting impatience of the true pendulum-tongued babbler of the tabby coterie,—swelling with a sense of importance at the chance of affecting all the minds of her scandal-loving neighbours with tales of surmisings and back-biting.

It was at the tea-table of a little serious coterie, of which Mrs. Skardon, a sour and sanctimonious gossip, was the head, that the following charitable reflections were made upon Lady Atherley, whose society, or patronage rather, till that day, they had courted with the greatest avidity. There are few things more surprising than the meanness exhibited, even in the *beau monde*, to procure acquaintance with those who are looked upon as the leaders of *ton*; the falsehoods that are told, the degradations that are submitted to, are incalculable. Mrs. Skardon had failed in an introduction to Lady Atherley, though she had put every paltry engine in motion to accomplish her wishes. “Hinc

illæ lacrymæ !” that is, in Leamington language, “hence this bile !” It was envy that actuated and *embittered* Mrs. Skardon, and many of her friends, to censure one they had previously courted ; — envy, that despicable and grovelling feeling which springs out of paltry natures, the mushrooms of little minds ; which resorts to every evil artifice to serve its purposes,—to falsehood, to detraction, to calumny, and to slander ! Mrs. Skardon was one of those ladies who inflict more mischief by their insinuations, than the most venomous propagators of downright palpable falsehoods : inasmuch as filmy inuendos gain an easier credence, and are less easily refuted, than positive accusations.

This Leamington amalgamation of Mrs. Candour and Sneerwell wished to gain the reputation of being a kindly, true, and liberal person ; and, to avoid the imputation of being a scandalmonger, had recourse to disingenuous *finesse*, pretending that the stories

which had originated with herself had been communicated by others, whom she sharply rebuked for their censorious tongues.

“I beg your pardon for being so late,” cried our old acquaintance Miss St. Leger, as she hastened into the room, “but really I was detained so long at the Adult Orphans’ School, that I could not be here sooner.” Here Miss St. Leger assumed the form of a religious, charitable, zealous *attachée* to adults, and such she was; but she met no charity from adults in return.

The name of Lady Atherley was accidentally mentioned, when Mrs. Skardon gave a deep sigh of what Ophelia calls the “bulk-shattering” order, and, with a look of most admired commiseration, exclaimed,—

“Poor Lord Atherley ! that profligate abandoned wife of his, will drive him mad !” Her auditors were all attention ; they had heard a rumour of Lady Atherley’s elopement, but were dying to hear *all* the particulars.

“Every one knows,” continued the Candour-

Sneerwell, “ that Mr. Ravensworth is a notorious gambler, that he has ruined his family ; *that*, I fear, there is no denying ! and I have been told by those who *ought* to know, that he drinks, and lives with the very worst society ; for *this*, however, I trust there is no foundation. I should be the last person to say anything unkind, but I have been assured that he is a Radical, or an atheist—they say each is equally bad—I am not sure which, but it may be (if there is any difference) *the worst*. As for Lady Atherley, there were odd stories, which I trust were exaggerations, of an affair with a certain Marquis ; but truly, if these things are false, it is quite monstrous that people should invent such wicked and abominable calumnies. I myself never listen to the gossip of backbiting neighbours, but one cannot quite shut one’s eyes ; and really, Lady Atherley’s conduct last year at the Stratford ball, was, to say the least of it, imprudent ! But remember, none of these stories originated

with me; for if there is one thing upon the earth that I abominate, it is tattling and detraction!" Thus talked the characters in the Leamington edition of the School for Scandal.

We have remarked upon the universal prevalence and almost irresistible career of curiosity, and on the importance which "trifles light as air" acquire, when valuable subjects of investigation are wanting. In large towns society is formed into different circles, which have their particular topics of conversation. The trifling incidents which happen, excite a temporary discussion, and perhaps furnish food for a nine days' wonder; these, however, are soon forgotten amidst the multiplicity of occurrences which are of a more important nature, and which more forcibly attract the attention of the public.

In a large and crowded metropolis a variety of interesting objects and incidents successively occur to excite and gratify curiosity, and furnish general conversation. In small communi-

ties the case is different; there society is on a more contracted scale, and the sphere of observation is confined within narrower limits; and there, too, the subjects of observation are few and trivial. A paucity of ideas must be expected in the latter, and trifles become of importance and interest. In such a state of intellectual sterility, general attention is eagerly turned to insignificant objects and events, the mind is engaged in frivolous inquiries, and the occurrences in a neighbour's family, the tiny events of the village, the *on dits* of the little day—engage attention, and excite the greatest and profoundest interest and scrutiny.

Nothing could exceed the deep humiliation Constance felt at encountering the “world's dread sneer,”—nay, worse, its compassion!—The compassion of the world is but the seal set to the confirmation of crime, in *soft war*.—She was received with coldness and frigid civility, and mortified at seeing the half-concealed look of disapprobation from those, who,

charitably disposed, were slow to blame, and who censured with pitying mildness. The haughty repulsive glance of others, too, — who never were placed in temptation's way, and who plumed themselves upon their immaculate conduct, — was to be encountered and — endured! The sufferer must be exposed to the satisfaction of those who triumphed at the fall of one whose talents, beauty, and rank, had made her “the observed of all observers!”

It were vain to detail the petty instances of annoyances that were resorted to.

“There can be no excuse for Lady Atherley,” said Miss St. Leger, with a toss of the head and a haughty curl of the nose.

“I always knew it would come to this!” exclaimed another.

“Her life has been a tissue of folly and absurdity,” added a third.

“To do her justice, poor dear, though silly and vain, I never thought her criminal.”

“She's a kind-hearted young creature!”

exclaimed another friend, who knew that the secret of the most effective scandal-mongering is to praise the object of your malice, though, like Mrs. Candour's "sincerity," — sincerity forces her to divulge a few objectionable qualities and incidents.

Then followed the "wise saws," and wholesome truisms, the bitter taunts, the insulting scorn, the dark inuendos, and ill-timed jests, of those pestilential cankerworms of society, — the whisperers of the neighbourhood.

Ravensworth did not escape from the net spread to enmesh and suffocate reputations. All persons now seemed suddenly striving to blacken the man, who, but a few months before, was looked upon as a gentleman, scholar, and man of *ton*! *He* was at once declared to be a gamester and a profligate, to be in debt to every tradesman, and to be so thronged with intrigues that damaged characters were laid at his door in bales. Every one declared he was the most accomplished villain



of the day ; and every one began to protest, with extempore discretion, that they had always distrusted even the appearance of his various virtues. He was by general coterie-consent *outlawed* as a man of feeling, delicacy, discretion, or honour.

Had an ordinary destiny awaited Constance, — a fall from fortune, a groundless estrangement of friends, — she would have borne her misfortune with resignation ; but hers was, indeed, an appalling fate ! In vain she tried to reason herself into firmness : days passed before she came to any resolution as to how she ought to act ; — too feeble both in body and mind to take any decided step, a week had passed, and she still was wavering as to the line of conduct she ought to pursue. She was too proud to throw herself upon her husband's pity and claim forgiveness : she felt that the saddest solitude was preferable to forcing herself upon one who had rejected her, and who would meet her with contempt. A little reflection aroused

her from the lethargy into which she had been plunged, and she felt that to appeal to her father and mother for protection, was her only true resource. But she dreaded the austerity of Sir Alexander, and, still more, the cold advice of Lady Margaret; and hence she deferred, from day to day, the painful task of addressing them. At length her thoughts became sufficiently collected to enable her to form projects for the future.

On the marriage of their daughter, Sir Alexander and Lady Margaret Graham had retired from the London world. Graham Castle was shut up, the house in Grosvenor Square let, and they had devoted their summers to Spa and Baden Baden; and their winters to Bath and Cheltenham. Lady Margaret felt, with peculiar keenness, the decrease of homage in those around her; and instead of sinking calmly and gracefully into the vale of years, she “hastened towards her setting” with a chequered and stormy lustre. The result of hours of serious

meditation in Constance was a letter to her mother; and, by return of post, she received the following ostentatious homily — upon the virtue of forgiveness, &c.—written in a *singular* style, though in the plural number.

“MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

“Your justly esteemed father, Sir Alexander, and myself, have ever congratulated ourselves on the possession of a child whose integrity and pureness of heart had gained her the respect and affection of all who knew her. It is with grief and shame we have heard of your distressing disregard of yourself. While, however, we feel the disgrace that such a step has brought upon our ancient family, our imperative sense of parental duty induces us to be indulgent and compassionate, and to temper our feelings with forbearance and pity. It is not our wish to judge of you with harshness or severity, — though a more wanton act than that you have

committed, never was paralleled (to leave your husband's home). Our object is to exhort, not to reprove;—to awaken you to a right sense of your duty, not to overwhelm you with natural but vain remonstrances. In this world of tribulation, we must all walk our ways in the same knowledge that we are compassed round with dangers and disappointments and inevitable miseries. I shall certainly make no objection to receive you as my guest until arrangements, suitable to your rank and station, are decided upon. God help me! It is a cruel fate, in my meridian of life, to have to reap troubles not of my own sowing. But I pray for patience to be granted to Sir Alexander and myself, and am,

“Your afflicted

“And affectionate Mother,

“MARGARET GRAHAM.

“P.S. Sir Alexander, in addition to all this, is labouring under a severe cold.”

“To Lady Atherley, Leamington.”

The distressing events of the preceding week had so entirely engrossed Lady Atherley's thoughts, that it was not until she was on the first stage to London, that the consideration of her future plans forced itself upon her attention. Various (but varying only in their degrees of misery) were the thoughts that occupied her mind on this sad and solitary journey; but we will not pause to describe her depression of spirit, or how often Constance pressed her hands upon her eyes to check the tears that *would* gush forth. She at times had hardly the heart to continue her journey; deeply did she feel the mortification of returning to that home she had left under such very different circumstances! acutely alive was she to the humiliation of throwing herself upon her offended relatives, now that her altered fortunes had destroyed her position in society.

As Lady Atherley approached the metropolis, and looked back upon all which had befallen her since she had quitted it, she found it diffi-

cult to convince herself that but a few weeks had elapsed since that period!

“Time and the hour run through the roughest day,” and Constance’s journey was at its end. The carriage drove up to the door of her parents. Sad, and dreadfully fatigued, she crossed the hall, passing through a lane of formidable-looking footmen. As she ascended the stairs she was met by the groom of the chambers, who, pompously calling to a page, desired that Lady Margaret’s message might be given to Lady Atherley! The substance of it was that neither Sir Alexander nor her Ladyship would be at home until a very late hour.

Lady Atherley was then conducted to the apartment she was to occupy. Here, in solitude, the events of the last month passed in rapid and confused review before her! her warm and ardent affection had been chilled by the rigidly phrased letter of Lady Margaret. A feeling of loneliness oppressed her: the for-

mality with which she was now treated, the affectionate parting when last she quitted her father's roof, and the cold reception she *now* met with (if reception it could be called at all), made her plunge her face in her clutched hands, and struggle with tears that would perforce "visit her sad eyes."

Wearied and dispirited, she threw herself on her sofa, hoping to lose in sleep the remembrance of the day's events. Time moved on but slowly; at length a loud knocking was heard, some one asked admittance at her door; she opened it, and Mrs. Griffiths (Lady Margaret's woman) appeared, and with a reserved air, not to be mistaken, said, "Her Ladyship wished to see Lady Atherley before she retired to rest."

Constance followed "in silence and tears." She entered Lady Margaret's room, and advanced to meet her mother with the most affectionate earnestness, but was chilled by a ceremonious and cold reception. Lady Margaret

slightly embraced her, and maintained a haughty silence: she had all the appearance of one struggling to pardon, and to pardon with dignity. The shadow of kindness came, and faded like a ghost of the once-living affection. There was no generous abandonment of heart to heart, nothing to mark the loving and grieving and generous mother, brooding over a child in the hour of overwhelming misfortune!

They parted for the night. Constance awoke the next morning, and awoke to the entire consciousness of where and with whom she was; overwhelming and tumultuous were the sensations that occupied her mind, and with her morning devotions were mixed humble entreaties to be endowed with that resignation which her acute sense of misery rendered necessary to her. She endeavoured to think she was under a parent's roof, but how came she there? and where in Sir Alexander and Lady Margaret could she find trace of a father and a



mother? Her own natural home was closed against her,—her name was on every tongue; she was an outcast! While these afflicting and appalling thoughts crowded upon her memory, it required all her strength of mind to enable her to bear up against contending, confounding, stupifying emotions. Severe was the conflict in her mind, and powerful; fatal was the effect upon her frame, and she betrayed symptoms of approaching illness. It was soon impossible to conceal that Lady Atherley was ill,—seriously ill; she had a wildness in her eye, like the glance—the glassed lustre of the eye—that seems the lurid light of fever or the misleading one of consumption.

It was not long before the medical man made his appearance, and his report was a very discouraging one: Lady Atherley was suffering under a severe attack of fever, and would be unlikely to quit her bed for some weeks. At the end of a longer period than even *that*, she

was but so far recovered as to be able to see Lord Atherley's man of business. He placed a paper in her hands, granting her an annuity for life ; and adding a condition that she would take possession of Wingfield Manor House, a property belonging to Lord Atherley. Compton Audley was to be shut up, and Lord Atherley had left for Paris, the city for broken or estranged hearts, and *bon-vivants* !

## CHAPTER IX.

## JOURNEY TO WINGFIELD.

“ Oh, could I feel as I have felt, or be what I have been,  
Or weep as I could once have wept, o’er many a vanish’d  
scene ;  
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish though  
they be,  
So midst the wither’d waste of life, those tears would flow  
to me.”

BYRON.

It was a bright clear frosty morning, with every thing sparkling in the sunshine. The last dry leaves of the preceding year still lingered on the branches of the trees, clothing the form of nature in the russet livery of decay, when Lady Atherley left London for the solitary asylum her husband had offered to her.

Wingfield Manor House, called in modern

days Atherley Manor, was formerly the splendid seat of the family of the Wingfields, and had passed, with the extensive estate attached to it, into the hands of the present Lord Atherley's great grandfather by his marriage with the heiress of that ancient house; and whose family pedigrees gave them possession of it before the Norman conquest. This noble residence was nearly destroyed by fire early in the sixteenth century, one wing being reduced to ruin; the remaining and centre one, containing chapel, hall, state, sleeping, and dining rooms, was fortunately saved, and remained in the same state as when honoured by the presence of Edward VI., in 1547.

“It was that goodly house,” in which the youthful monarch stated, “he had been marvellously, yea, rather excessively banketted;” in 1591, (according to an old illuminated MS.) Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, “nature's glory,” the “world's wonder,” “fortune's empress,” had been “most royallie feasted.”

The ruins of the east wing contained the most perfect traces of the general architecture, and exhibited proofs of its amazing strength. The gateway, flanked by its ivy-grown towers, frowned against time; the fallen roof, blackened gable, and ruinous walls, showed desolation's triumph over poverty! On Lord Atherley's accession, the immense range of out-offices had been converted into cottages.

The country around was indescribably dreary; a dense wilderness immediately behind the manor-house, arose hill after hill, in weary succession, whose withered fern and shrivelled heather, afforded but a bare existence to the browsing flocks ("wilder far than they") that gleaned their pasture. The brown moors assumed a barren mossy hue, and the dusky soil in large masses, bereft of herbs and grass, and clad only with low birches and cheerless pines and firs, showed nature in all her poverty.

No human habitation met your eyes far and

wide, and when you encountered the aged shepherd idling about, your only wonder was, where he could possibly find a home. The moor, where it was met by the horizon, was bounded by a thickly wooded domain, where huge oaks, the growth of centuries, waved over long dark terraces of rank grass, which the scythe had not touched for years. Dilapidated grottoes of shell-work, now green with moss, and hermitages in ruins, were within these olden shades ; and while they impressed upon the mind that grandeur once dwelt there, at the same moment proclaimed, in ruins legible as black letter, the tale of its long desertion.

It is melancholy to view the almost general devastation of the venerable structures which were once the pride and ornament of “merrie England ;” the strongholds of illustrious and ancient families during the civil wars. The vaulted roof, the fretted window, the grassy courts, the arched passages no longer echo the voice of festivity and joy ; all is deserted, and

“The echo and the empty tread,  
But sound like voices of the dead.”

And yet it were impossible to look upon the dilapidated remains of this vast edifice, which had formerly been the dwelling-place of the Wingfields and Atherleys, in all their power and grandeur, without a sensation almost amounting to awe! There is no ruin without its thousand stirring associations;—and could the walls but speak, what historians would they be of those times, to which age gives so shadowy an interest! There is a melancholy pleasure in reflecting on all the eras of the house's glory, now like the brief records of its occupiers, passed away almost into oblivion. Those times arise anew, when its lofty halls, decorated with all the splendid trappings of wealth and magnificence, and peopled with the noble, the brave, and the beautiful, resound with the voices of life and revelry.

The journey was drearily performed, with-

out accident, and on the second evening Lady Atherley approached the Wingfield estate; but she noticed it not. With a heavy heart, and enfeebled by her recent illness, she sat in a corner of the carriage, her veil closely drawn over her. November had set in, that month of darkness, storms, and mists; it was a cold afternoon, and the sun was declining, leaving a gloomy twilight. The country looked sad, damp, and comfortless; the trees were all but stripped of their leaves, the hail beat against the window, and the prospect was cheerless. All was in unison with one desolate heart; in the language of Ossian "Autumn was dark on the mountains; grey mists rest on the hills, dark rolls the river through the narrow plain, the leaves whirl round with the wind, and strew the grave of the dead." Upon the carriage drawing up at the gate a loud ringing at the bell aroused Constance from her reverie, and she perceived the cold and stern manor-house, standing upon the brow of a bleak hill.



The suite of apartments which had been arranged for the occupation of Lady Atherley, were the state-rooms situated in the wing of the building we have already described; and they still preserved their polished floors of black oak. The walls were painted “after the manner of the ancient period with legendary stories.” The stately couch, with its dark damask curtains, its ponderous cornices, exquisitely carved in emblems of war; the high-backed chairs, covered with old tapestry, in colours so faded that scarcely a vestige of the subject could be traced; the fine oak carvings — all gave a solemnity to the place that toned in with Constance’s forlorn spirit, and “suited the gloomy habit of her soul.” Fatigued with bodily exertion, from the length of the journey and badness of the roads, and not a little harassed in mind, Constance yielded herself up, distressed and worn, from overpowering and contending thoughts, early to rest. Sleep, which for some time had abandoned her

restless pillow, returned that night like a dove from the troubled waters to its nest, and brooded with all its peaceful influence over it; bringing too, on its healing wings, such a “rosy dream” of renovating happiness, as seemed to be the reflection of the bright and fitting form of *past* happiness. She dreamed of the time, when with a spirit unbroken by “aught remorse could claim or virtue scorn,” and alive only to unalloyed serenity, she had centred her every hope, her affection on one who had been her all; the source of every feeling, the end of every wish! Then came gentle shadowings of love, and all that her *first* love had promised her; and then, with bitter feelings did she arrive at the infatuation that had made her (in the eyes of the world,) “fall, never to rise again,” and in her affliction she wept over the complicated error that had sacrificed her.

But to return: Ravensworth was thunder-struck at hearing of the separation; the possi-

bility of so stern and strong a proceeding had never occurred to him. To condemn Lady Atherley unheard, appeared so great an act of cruelty in her husband, that it curdled his very blood to dwell upon it. His heart, sensible only of Contance's injuries, rose indignantly against him who had thus sealed her fate. The power which Constance had established in his breast, became painfully increased : he looked upon her as deeply, irreparably injured ; he had loved her (as devotedly as man seldom does love) in her prosperity, and now, at the period of suffering, with a spirit chastened and softened by affliction, his feelings were a thousand times more absorbed in her.

Callous, indeed, must have grown the heart of Dudley, if it had lost its fealty to Constance while under so severe a trial. He felt that he had wrought all her misery ; and to soothe her in adversity, to support and guide her through the dreary path of life, to mitigate her distresses, seemed to remain his dearest duty,

as it would be his only solace. But how to accomplish this generous wish,—to follow Lady Atherley to her place of seclusion would be to confirm the ruin of her character. He would seek Lord Atherley, unburthen his mind to him, exonerate Lady Atherley, and at any peril and every sacrifice do her reputation justice. He resolved to crush all feelings which could in the slightest way impede Constance's restoration to society.

Had Dudley wanted an immediate illustration of the fragile nature of man's resolutions, and of how much they are the sport of fortune, he could have found one at once in his own breast. Ravensworth ordered his horse, determined to proceed immediately to Isleworth, where Mr. Cresswell (the kind-hearted man of business to Lord Atherley, to whom we have before alluded,) dwelt. It was a clear, frosty day; Ravensworth had not proceeded further than that "public," the half-way house between Hyde Park corner and Kensington;

when his horse trod on a loose, sharp flint,—came down, and after a plunging endeavour to save himself, cut his knees so dreadfully, that to proceed was impossible.

And here we must digress. There is no better proof of the liberty of the subject, nor a finer specimen of the English saying, “that a man’s house is his castle,” than the half-way house in question. There it stands, a stubborn proof, an unsightly monument of the national regard to civil rights. Within a short distance of the palaces of Kensington, St. James, and Buckingham—near to the residences of England’s proudest nobles—this miserable looking hostelry “rears its humble head,” and asserts its title to liberty as well as *licence*. In any other country it would have been razed to the earth for private ends on public grounds. In England—odd, happy, free, resolute England—while it shows anything but an attraction to the casual passer-by, it is to the sensible and

reflecting observer a lasting memorial of the inalienable rights of the humblest subject.

But, to break off from this patriotic fit of digression. The landlord of the King's Head came out from under one of the signs of the times; offered to send the horse to the stables, and to procure another immediately; at the same time civilly requesting Dudley to enter his bar. To these propositions Ravensworth assented, and he was ushered into "mine host's" parlour—opening as it did by a glass window upon the tap-room, wherein were portraits of Lady Huntingdon, Tom Cribb, Pincher, and Sir Francis Burdett. Around a huge fire were assembled a large party of wayfarers and drovers. They were discussing some disturbances that had lately taken place in Hampshire.

"Depend upon it," said one, a sturdy-looking countryman, "if they don't give up the murderer of Gipsy Jack, they'll burn Wingfield Manor House."

Dudley was attracted by these words.

“Ah, poor lady,” continued the rough speaker, “she be poorly enou’ wi’out that; it ’ill be the death on her.”

Dudley started at these words, and could not bear any suspense. He called the man on one side, and heard from him (under *coined* persuasion) particulars which in the ensuing chapter shall be laid before our readers. So important was the information in Dudley’s estimation, that he mounted his unsound horse, dashed back to London, hastened to his own house, speeded all arrangements on the moment, and was on the road to Wingfield Manor House within an hour of the event we have related.

## CHAPTER X.

## WINTER AND ATTACK.

Lastly, came Winter cloathed all in frize,  
Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill;  
Whilst on his hoary beard his breath did freese.

SPENSER.

Cold grew the foggy morn, the day was brief;  
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf!  
The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods  
Roar'd with strong blasts; with mighty showers, the  
floods!

All green was vanish'd save of pine and yew,  
That still displayed their melancholy hue;  
Save the green holly, with its berries red,  
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.

CRABBE.

THE winter was now fast closing in, and  
threw an air of desolation on all around:

“Murky night soon follows hazy morn.”



Constance felt the unprotected loneliness of her situation, and indescribable fears arose upon, and connected themselves with, the natural terrors which had long beset her. To mope by the fire of a solitary house on a long winter's evening; to hear the wind howling and moaning amongst the decayed walls and mighty trees; to be startled with the shaking of the ill-fastened doors and casements; to hear the rain splashing against the panes, and listen to the gale in the surrounding gloomy woods—formed the miserable occupation of the poor banished one. No other sound save the bay-  
ing of the watch-dog broke the monotony, and this sullen variety of tone might well have been spared.

Nothing could exceed Lady Atherley's anxiety to live on good terms with the tenantry and neighbours; she was constantly employed in ministering to their wants and attending to their mental cultivation. She took every opportunity of improving their condition, of affording

every comfort to those in need, which their necessities might require. She showed kindness to the poor ; established a school for the orphan children ; but unfortunately all her efforts were unavailing. Lord Atherley's strict orders for the preservation of the game had rendered the family extremely unpopular. There had been constant affrays between the poachers and gamekeepers, in one of which a poacher had been desperately wounded. The gang had vowed vengeance against the perpetrators. Notices were posted against the premises, threatening a total destruction of the property if the obnoxious keepers were not immediately discharged. Nocturnal depredations were made on the out-buildings ; and, added to these, the neighbourhood had been suffering from the ravages of an epidemic disease. The absentee-ism of the principal landlords in the country, therefore—who leaving their affairs in the niggard hands of their stewards, had turned a deaf ear to the murmurs

of the people—rendered the districts more disturbed, and the threats of violence became louder and less ambiguous. Lady Atherley strove to conciliate; but attempts at conciliation with an infuriated gathering of the people are but as oil upon the fire.

Christmas came, — that often described and ever joyous season of social intercourse, but it brought not its festivities. No song was heard, no light laugh thrilled through the halls, no interchange of kindred enjoyments took place. Christmas brings with it so many recollections of those days in which the mind, too young to feel the cares of life and too ingenuous for that suspicion of mankind which destroys the zest of social intercourse,—is open to none but impressions of delight, gratitude, and gladness! The reminiscences of early life, which blend the rainbow visions of hope and youth with the religious feelings and innocent recreations akin to the time, give to this endeared season a hallowed and yet, at the

same time, an exhilarating aspect ! Who, amongst our readers, has forgotten the encouraging smile of beloved parents, — now, perhaps no more, — as seated at the table, and surrounded by generation upon generation, all met together once a year, in full and perfect earthly society !—At this *congress* of the affections, who has forgotten the formidable *yule-log*, the tale, the dance, the game, the mince-pie, the spiced bowl ? and then are not all these lighted by happy eyes, that shine then as though they “ would never go out ! ”

The year was drawing to the close, as we have said ; — dark December days, gloomy, and chill, and silent, followed each other in funeral procession. The ground was covered with snow, as with a pall ; the horizon seemed laden with many storms ; the cold, piercing, cutting north-east wind moaned mournfully, sweeping the descending snow along. The hail, at times, rattled against the windows.

At the period of which we write, insubor-

dination and malcontent stalked through the frightened land, and the whole country blazed with incendiary fires. In the metropolis, Spa Fields was the scene of a murderous riot; the inflammatory harangues of traitors were heard in eternal public meetings; in the provinces the high price of provisions kept up the fearful excitement. The bewildered poor indulged in their usual incomprehensible system of political economy, and burned ricks to bring down the price of corn!

On one of these evenings Lady Atherley spent hour after hour in reviewing the past, and forming plans for the future. All the events of her past life glided spectre-like before her, and bitterly did she shudder at the contemplation of them. Her youthful gaiety and griefless beauty,—now where were they? In one brief year how many events had been consummated?—how many destinies fixed for ever? Her thoughts then turned from a sorrowing retrospect to a reflection upon her immediate

position ; and “there was no hope in it !” For some time she remained in silent meditation ; then, throwing herself upon her couch, she gave vent to her anguish in unrestrained and abundant tears. Time wore, and at last she heard the clock of the neighbouring church strike twelve. The last stroke had scarcely trembled away when she heard two shots fired in quick succession,—confused noises broke upon the night. Again some scattered shots were fired, and a roar of voices sounded, as if approaching nearer and nearer to the Manor House. In the first moment of alarm she would have rushed to the window, but flashes of light terrified her ; then, uncertain how to act, she listened, and again all was still.

The exalted heroism of woman is seldom evinced except on extraordinary occasions ; it is only in situations requiring the exercise of the most powerful energies, that she can divest herself of the habitual gentleness of her nature. When real occasions have presented themselves,

—when excited by the brightest virtues and noblest sympathies of human nature, “woman’s devotion” has, with a total forgetfulness of all personal feeling, carried her into and through dangers such as men would have thought it no shame to shrink from! What could exceed the undaunted courage and high-daring of Semiramis, Zenobia, Boadicea, Joan of Arc, the two Artimisias?—Artimisia, Queen of Halicarnassus, and of some neighbouring islands, followed Xerxes in his expedition against Greece. Her conduct at the battle of Salamis drew from the Persian monarch the remark, that on that day the men had behaved like women, and the women like men! It was at the sea-fight that the Persian king rewarded her with a splendid suit of armour, and, to mark the cowardice of the naval commander, sent him a distaff and a spindle! The examples of the devotion of women, in accompanying their husbands or lovers in perilous expeditions, in exile, in death, are beautifully

numerous:—Agrippina, wife of Germanicus; Isabella of Spain; Madonna Taddea of Milan:—numerous, indeed, are the instances of female martyrs, attesting, with their death, the purity and the truth of “woman’s devotion!”

But modern times are not eclipsed by the ancient days of female heroism. At the siege of Matagorda a memorable instance of female heroism occurred. A sergeant’s wife, named Retson, was in a casement with the wounded men, when a drummer-boy was ordered to fetch water from the well of the fort. On going out, the boy faltered under the severity of the fire; upon which she took the vessel from him, and, although a shot *cut the bucket cord when in her hand*, she braved the terrible cannonade, and brought the water in safety to the wounded men!

The time had now come when Constance was called upon to “dare do all that may become” — a woman; for incendiarism had brought its desolating torch to the threshold



of Wingfield Manor House. An hour passed away, and Constance, harassed and wearied by her fears and anxiety, was retiring to her room, when her attention was suddenly attracted by flashes of light which illuminated the passage. On opening the window-shutters, she perceived, with horror and astonishment, that the barn and hayricks were in flames. The barn, a mass of dense dun flame, sent up a column of black smoky vapour into the sky, and “shook its red shadow o’er the startled” trees. The reddening light against the casements, bursting out with the suddenness and fierceness of a loosened volcano, glared upon Constance’s features, as she stood, startled at the outbreak of the fire.

While Constance stood appalled the building fell with a frightful crash, and an explosion of sparks and smoke flew circling and whirling upwards in dun red sparks; and then the conflagration became on the instant black and hardly perceptible. She now closed the win-

dow. Appalled, yet nerved by imminent danger, — “ See to the engines ! ” cried Lady Atherley to some of the affrighted servants that now entered the room.

At this moment there was a terrifying peal at the hall-door bell.

“ Run, Thomas, quick ! did you not hear the bell ? ”

“ Yes, my Lady,” replied the man.

“ Quick, quick ! send assistance to the farm — the Cobdens — ”

“ Oh, my Lady, don’t think of taking them in,” cried the housekeeper ; “ they ’ve caused all this *to do* ; we shall all be murdered by — ”

“ They ’ve vowed vengeance against Mark for wounding Gipsy Jack,” said the bailiff.

“ Admit them without hesitation ; it would be cowardly to refuse shelter and protection to an honest family.”

The bailiff was about to make some reply, when they were startled by the scrambling

sound of horses' feet in the court-yard, and the ringing of the house-bell.

Constance sprang to the window. "Hush ! I heard a sound !"

"It's only the wind blowing the branches against the casement, my Lady," replied the housekeeper : still she listened anxiously to every sound, nor did she listen long in vain : another peal sounded at the gate, so loud and long, that the domestics trembled with alarm. At last she fancied she caught the sound of Ravensworth's name.

"Ravensworth," faltered Constance, "surely it cannot be ! Ravensworth ! no, no, impossible !" Starting from her seat she awaited the approach of footsteps, while her heart beat with such violence that she was forced to lean for support against the wall.

It *was* Ravensworth ! she saw him spring from his horse, drenched with the storm, his manner betraying the greatest anxiety. The

gates were unbarred, the door was thrown open; Ravensworth hastily entered. Constance became first deadly pale, and then flushed by the deepest crimson. Joy, fear, anxiety, doubt, were by turns depicted on her countenance; but it became necessary that prompt measures should be taken to defend the house: at the mention of this, the housekeeper screamed, Mrs. Viney became hysterical, and the domestics, male and female, went through a similar ceremony.

Constance alone was silent, and Ravensworth was struck with admiration at her calmness and self-possession; she looked anxious, but, instead of adding to the confusion, she assisted in summoning the servants, and describing, with the greatest exactness, the nature of the building and the cause of the attack. Ravensworth then drew around him those who had been able to provide themselves with arms, and arranged them so as to appear a formidable force in two ranks. No one uttered a word or

moved a step: it was a terrible suspense. Already voices might be heard nearing the entrance; and, by the rapid shuffling of feet, it was evident the infuriated populace were approaching. A yell of execration burst from them, in their eagerness to wreak their vengeance upon the inmates or servants of the house.

“Give up Mark Cobden,” cried the hoarse voice of the ringleader, the terror of the country, known by the name of Black Will.

“Never!” exclaimed Ravensworth; “at the peril of your lives, advance! — we are armed.”

“Forward, my lads!” cried the miscreant.

“Attention!” said Ravensworth; “make ready!”

The windows of the hall were now dashed in, and the door burst open; a fearful shriek from the women, mingled with the half-uttered and deep threats of the assailants, were blended together.

“Surrender, or we fire!” said Ravensworth, in a calm tone

“Never!” replied Black Will. “Defend yourselves! My lads, forward! Let us avenge our comrade, Gipsy Jack!” Almost before these words had passed his lips he had sprung from the window, and held a pistol to Ravensworth’s head; at the same moment a shot was discharged at the ruffian from the corridor where the females had taken refuge, and he fell with a howl of pain. Meanwhile five or six of the gang had rushed into the room to aid their leader.

“Front rank, fire!” exclaimed Ravensworth. The shots whizzed through the air, and two of the poachers fell. Filled as the hall was with smoke, it became almost impossible to distinguish friend from foe. The groans of the wounded ringleader now struck Constance’s ears; she approached him; he was in the agonies of death. The ruffian made a dying effort at revenge; the grasp of a large pocket-knife, and a plunge with his right hand, were but the work of a second. Ravensworth

rushed forward, averted the blow, which merely grazed its victim's arm, and the baffled hand fell, clutched and heavy, on the floor.

The head of Constance dropped lifeless on Dudley's shoulder, who at first thought that life was extinct. He bore her to the open casement, chafed her hands, sprinkled some water on her forehead, and called tenderly upon her name; but, for many minutes, no sign of animation returned. At length, a deep drawn sigh announced her return to life and consciousness. There was yet a wildness in her eyes and a nervous tremor in her frame, which showed the severity of the shock she had sustained. By degrees she recovered, though her mind still retained but a confused recollection of what had occurred.

"Save him, save him!" she cried, with an agonising sob.

"Calm yourself, Constance," whispered Ravensworth, gently; "you are safe; all is well."

Gradually a sense of the whole came over

her, and gratitude to Heaven and her preserver wholly occupied her mind.

It is wonderful how scenes of danger and of great excitement draw heart to heart, and bind together, in bonds indissoluble, those that have passed them, side by side. Ravensworth was now left alone with Lady Atherley; there was much to be told, much to be explained; he turned towards her with a silent smile, and found her eyes fixed upon him, with a deep and intense gaze; she dropped them as soon as they met his, but that one look proved that the whole thought and feeling of her heart were concentrated in him, and in all she owed him. He advanced towards her, took her hand, and pressed it to his lips. Constance lifted up her eyes.

“Oh, Dudley,” she said, “what do I not owe you?” She burst into tears.

“You owe me nothing,” Dudley replied.

“Would to Heaven that it were in my



power to prove to you the extent of my gratitude."

"I am *your* debtor still," exclaimed Ravensworth, whose joy was boundless. "How can I ever repay you?"

These words, the plaintive modulation of her voice, the beautiful expression of gratitude in her radiant countenance, the tear that rose to her eyes, were at once fatally decisive, and Dudley poured forth the impassioned sentiments of a fervid and overwhelming love. He told her how unchanged and unchangeable his affection for her was,—how it had increased in spite of himself,—how he had struggled to subdue it,—how deeply and ardently he loved her. But how shall we express the power of that eloquence which bursts forth from the surprised heart in a crisis of deep feeling and deep distress? Words, on these occasions, seem to have lost all their power and changed all their acceptations. During

this terrible and entrancing conflict the “still small voice” was hardly audible: every word he uttered vibrated to her heart like a chord of sweet music; yet a shudder passed over her, and she burst into a flood of tears, weak, womanly tears—how fatal in their power and their danger!

Here would we willingly drop a veil over this dark page of our history!—

Oh! too convincing—dangerously dear—  
In woman’s eye the unanswerable tear!

\* \* \* \* \*

Avoid it—Virtue ebbs and Wisdom errs,  
Too fondly gazing on that grief of hers!

Tears, that once changed the destiny of the world, now cost our heroine “her peace on earth, her hope in Heaven!”—How vain were it to attempt to describe the pangs, the doubts, the fears, the struggles, the endless irritation of her disordered mind! Driven to despair,—unsupported now by principle; every domestic

tie broken, — all good resolutions wrecked ! where,—what was she ? He who saved her from the ruffian's blow had better have left her to her fate ! An unsullied grave had been preferable to an erring life ! In the hour which had seen Constance “ fall from her high estate,” in that hour, her husband's star had set for ever.

The morning came, and oh, what a lovely morning ! the sun rose brightly and cloudlessly, tinting all objects with its gorgeous colouring. Constance awoke, and thought that the day was a mockery of light ! Never did nature look more beautiful in itself—or sad to her. Remorse had secured one more victim, to undergo the Promethean fate !

## CHAPTER XI.

## DEATH OF LORD ATHERLEY.

Thou bid'st me dry my tearful eyes ;  
But hast thou ever shed those tears,  
In each of which such sorrow lies—  
As might compress the woe of years ?  
Oh ! hast thou felt what 'tis to sigh,  
And weep o'er bliss for ever fled ;  
To long, and yet to fear to die,  
When every hope is crush'd and dead ?  
No ! hadst thou ever felt that woe,  
That aching void, that agony—  
Which causes these wild tears to flow,  
And makes me heave this sobbing sigh ;  
Thou would'st not bid me dry the tear ;  
For thou would'st know it was in vain,  
Alas ! alas ! as vain it were,  
As bid me cherish hope again.

MRS. FAIRLIE.

A FRESH trial awaited Constance. On the following morning, she had scarcely seated herself

at breakfast, when the servant presented her with a letter. The broad black edge at once attracted her attention ; and at the first glance at the address she perceived it to be the handwriting of Mr. Cresswell, Lord Atherley's man of business. She gazed at it with sudden apprehension ; a dreadful presentiment filled her mind,—a deadly sickness of the soul seized her ! Lost in a strange abstraction of mind, she stood rivetted to the spot. At length she summoned resolution to break the seal ; the letter informed her of Lord Atherley's death, having been suddenly seized with apoplexy in Paris. It will be remembered that immediately after the ill-omened day on which Lord Atherley had acted so severe a part to Lady Atherley, he had hurried from London, the associations of which were no longer endurable. In the French metropolis, whither he had repaired, he perseveringly endeavoured by drinking the poisoned chalice of dissipation to drug himself into oblivion of the past, and for a time he

succeeded in banishing care, but at length fell a victim to his intemperance, having been suddenly carried off in a fit of apoplexy. With what overpowering sensations Lady Atherley read the enclosed note from Lord Atherley, it would be difficult to describe. It was dated the day he left England ; it urged her “ to blot from her recollection all remembrance of the past, and enclosed a deed restoring her the sum he had received as her marriage-portion !” Stunned by the shock she had received, hours passed away whilst yet Constance sat pale and motionless as a statue, as if under the influence of a frightful dream ; her heart throbbed violently ; reproaches, anger, she could have borne ; but kindness, forgiveness, generosity, from one she had so deeply injured, had totally disarmed her. She wept bitter tears of repentance ; for where is the heart so hardened that does not feel a severe pang at the voice of unmerited kindness ? A voice that *would* be

heard spoke to her of broken vows! Never had she felt so acutely the humiliation of her own fallen condition; her imagination became excited to a feverish degree, she would have given worlds to have recalled the past month. Now, she was banished from the world! She saw what she *might* have been; she felt what she *was*. The remembrance of all the consideration she had formerly received, the position she had once held, contrasted with the blight she had brought upon herself, was more than woman's nature could support. Her head became dizzy,—she fell to the ground. On her recovery, after a long period of unconsciousness, she felt the necessity of rousing her drooping energies. The funeral was to take place at Compton Audley. To mourn the death of such a man as Lord Atherley would scarcely be possible in any one not severely interested, but there still existed in the gentle heart of Constance a feeling of kind

regret and compassion. She had freely forgiven his ill-treatment of herself; and, indeed, her own conduct had rendered all her sufferings but the stern retribution of justice.

A funeral in the country is much more impressive than in the midst of a large city, where, in the bustle and distraction of active life, we lose a proper sense of its warning and solemnity. The morning was ushered in by the heavy tolling church bell, "swinging slow with solemn roar" its solitary knell. The shops of the principal tradesmen were closed; groups of the inhabitants were scattered about; some few out of respect, but by far the greater part from curiosity. Awe and silence at death, rather than for the dead, prevailed. The villagers spoke to one another in whispers, as they clustered about the church doors. There was no tear in any eye—no sorrow in any heart. Yet there was the aspect of sorrow on all around. The mansion looked forlorn and de-



solate ; every shutter was closed ; the body was borne slowly from its gates, beneath the sable plumes of a hearse ; the carriages and noble horses of the deceased followed, as if in mockery of his present state ; a procession of coaches of the neighbouring gentry, with the customary trappings of woe, brought up the rear. Strange that man's vanity should follow him to the final earthly house ; that he should still surround himself with the empty pomp of heraldry, the insignia of rank and power, when reduced to that state which levels all distinctions,—where the slave is on an equality with the monarch. On reaching the family mausoleum a hushing silence reigned among the assemblage. The coffin, in all the pomp of crimson velvet, gilt plate, and nails, was lowered into the earth. The voice of the reader was heard ; the solemn service of the dead was performed ; the rattling of the dust on the coffin announced its close. The stone was

placed on the sepulchre, and the home appointed for all clay had received another link from the long-living line of a noble house.

The funeral obsequies being completed, Lady Atherley returned to Wingfield Manor. The excitement—misery—she had lately undergone, were more than her frame could bear. She was seized with a violent illness, and for some days her life was in danger,—truly mournful was her condition. The physician who had been called in to attend her did not hesitate to pronounce her complaint an affection of the lungs, softening the case, however, as much as possible, by the assurance that there was no immediate fear of danger: still there were symptoms of a consuming of the frame.

Ravensworth had in the mean time been called to Ireland to receive a father's last sigh. This mournful call could not be disobeyed, and Dudley hastened to Dublin, but

too late. His father had expired, and he heard himself greeted as Sir Dudley Ravensworth. Impatient to return to the dear and widowed mourner, he remained no longer in Ireland than was necessary to attend the funeral of his parent. At length they met. We pass over Lady Atherley's early widowhood, her remorse, her slow recovery of health, her retirement from the world. Time travelled on. She accepted Ravensworth, trusting "his unfailing love would guide, and support, and cheer her to the end."

As soon as a twelvemonth had elapsed, the marriage between Lady Atherley and Sir Dudley Ravensworth took place at the village church. No pomp was added to the ceremony. The bonds she now entered into were not hallowed by a parent's blessing, or her own unshadowed happiness; and yet when she thought of Dudley's devotion, a gleam of faint joy stole over her soul. She felt, and fondly

hoped, that the congeniality of their minds and dispositions, which now existed, would endure for ever, and that nothing but death would sever the vows plighted between them !

Those of our readers who have followed our heroine through her previous ill-fated career to the period when brighter prospects dawned upon her, and who, according to marriages in modern novels, anticipated that Lady Atherley enjoyed unmingled happiness, and was adored by Dudley, and that the days glided on in blissful content, blessed in each other's affection.

——— “Happiest of their kind  
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate  
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend ;”

or, in the words of old novelists, “that they flourished long in tender bliss, and reared a numerous offspring, lovely like themselves,

the grace of all the country around ;”— we counsel to close the page, that they may be spared—

‘That hideous sight—a naked human heart.’

## CHAPTER XII.

## TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

O Caledonia, stern and wild,  
Meet nurse for a poetic child !  
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,  
Land of the mountain, and the flood !

WALTER SCOTT.

RAVENSWORTH seemed to have now attained the height of his wishes ; he was in possession of the only woman whom he had ever loved, still there were moments when he was not happy. A year had nearly elapsed since the event mentioned in the last chapter—bringing with it the numerous revolutions which time

produces upon all human nature ; Ravensworth and his bride had travelled through many parts of England without any definite object in view ; wearied with continual change, it was among the wild beauties of Scotland that they sought seclusion. The summer had commenced, and they set out alone on their intended excursion.

Nothing material happened during their journey ; the weather was fine, and, exhilarated by the change of air and scene, Constance experienced a buoyancy of spirits to which she had long been a stranger. Occasionally a sigh was wrung from her by bitter recollection ; she could not lull the past utterly,—could not quiet “ the worm that never dies ! ” In solitude, fallen as she was in her own esteem, with tears streaming from her eyes, with bursting sobs that shook her whole frame, she thought of him she had wronged !

Constance had all that feeling for the beauties of nature which belongs to a refined taste, romantic imagination, and cultivated mind ;

every object was new and interesting to her,—and the prospect of her northern tour was a constant source of delight and hope. Dudley shared in her enjoyment; his affection was the sunshine of her existence. When a woman truly loves, she moulds her tastes and views to those of the object of her affection. She sees with *his* eyes,—she feels with *his* feelings. Our travellers reached the Scottish lakes, and nowhere could a spot have been found better suited for peaceful retirement from the world's gaze than Glengaelloch — the *one* they had selected. Their cottage was romantically situated between Inveruglas and the point of Firkin. To the left, amid a profusion of thickets, knolls, and crags, lay the bed of a broad mountain lake; high hills, rocks, and banks, waving with natural forests of oak and birch, formed the borders of this enchanting sheet of water.

On the right all was deep solitude, no trace appeared of any living thing save now



and then a red deer springing from a thicket, or an eagle towering down the glen. A mountain burn was visible, as far as the eye could reach, — hurling its waters downwards from the mountain, contracted sometimes between narrow defiles and dark chasms, — sometimes enlarged, obstructed by craggy rocks, and foaming among the fragments which seemed to have been cleft for its course. From a lofty wooded precipitous rock, Nature presented to the eye one of the most surpassingly beautiful, wild, and sublime views imaginable ! Here were rough quarries, rocks, and hills, — whose “heads touch heaven.” Glengaelloch was nothing but an unpretending cottage residence : it contained three rooms on the ground floor, with corresponding ones above. A few acres of garden, and a paddock, formed the grounds ; and the little boundaries once passed, all around and beyond was rude, barren, and boundless. Placed at the extremity of a deep sequestered glen, the

little cottage seemed to be the presiding spirit of peace over the spot.

Constance and Dudley wandered through the wild and lovely regions, listening to ancient Highland stories, and entering into all the par-tizanship of clanship and wild chivalry. There was a soul in the scene,—there was an old romance in every thing,—in every blue mountain and bright lake,—in the dark chasms, in the deep ravine,—the wild and rocky alpine glen,—the cascade thundering down the mountain side,—the river chafing its way through its obstructed channel—amid rocks and trees,—a charm gilded alike the present and the past, and caused the heart to beat at the name of the musterings and gatherings of the tartaned heroes of an uncouth but daring age. The pen of the mighty Magician of the North had thrown an enchantment over these scenes, which the scenes themselves heightened, while they welcomed it. No heart could turn itself loose over such spots, once so patriotically and

widely peopled, and not “warm to the tartan.” In their rambles Dudley and Constance found an indescribable pleasure in contemplating the grand variety of nature, and the magnificent and abrupt forms in which it was her fantastic humour to appear.

The “bright lake of lovely islands,” the paragon of the Scottish lakes, Loch Lomond, now burst upon them; the vast expanse of water to the south,—with its numerous islands, some of them enriched by nature with woods and rocks, and peopled with red deer; some cultivated by the hand of man into a fair and fertile land of fields of corn; and others, mere barren rocks (here and there a straggling shrub or tree), was all before them. The northern extremity of the lake narrows away until it is lost among dusky and retreating mountains, which overshadow its waters as it penetrates the Arroguhar hills; and all is bounded by the lofty Ben Lomond, who rises majestically, rearing his broad and gigantic bulk, like an

Atlas, to the sky ! The eastern side, which is peculiarly rough and rugged, was formerly the chief seat of Macgregor and his clan. Occupying a district almost inaccessible, when roads were unknown and the country more wooded, the Macgregors were enabled to carry on a cruel as well as a predatory system of warfare on the surrounding clans ; forcing contributions under the title of “ black mail.” But it would be vain to attempt to describe scenes, fitted only for the *one* pen, or the artist’s pencil, and which can hardly bear to be tamed into description.

The wanderers scarcely spoke to each other, so charmed were they by the air of stillness and solemnity around them : their dreamy associations were not materialised by any thoughts of busy every-day life ; they felt the poetry, which external nature in the hour of twilight majestically creates !

“ I love thee, twilight ! as thy shadows roll,  
The calm of evening steals upon the soul ;

Sublimely tender, solemnly serene,  
Still as the hour, enchanting as the scene !  
Twilight I love thee,—let thy glooms increase  
Till every feeling,—every pulse—is peace !”

At the time of which we write, steamboats were not to be seen, as now they are,—daily plying, freighted with human loads from the land of Cockayne, all flaunting in tartans—which they confound with plaids,—while the citizen from Tooley Street “wi’ his fat wame” in a short Hieland coat, and his puir short houghs gartered below the knee, like a “lang legged gilly,” surprises the North. Now, indeed, southern folks and their progenies, rejoicing in the euphonious sounding names of Stubbs, Thompson, Smith, and Brown; dressed in the “Highland garb” from the ready-made establishments and juvenile repositories in the classical purlieus of Cranbourn Alley, wend to the land of cakes. A blazing suit of scarlet velvet tartan, the “belted plaid” of divers colours (an illegitimate offspring which

the weavers, backed by the ladies and haberdashers, have lately fashioned, and which bids defiance to all classification), the bonnet adorned with ostrich plumes, like an undertaker's horse; these form the costume of the brief travellers. Haberdashers, bred and born within the sound of Bow bells, singing, "My 'art's in the 'ighlands, my 'art is not 'ere;" attorneys and merchants' clerks,—forming their ideas of Scotch costume from the conspicuous representations at the doors of tobacconists' shops; "kilted to the knee," petticoated, plaided, plumed, pursed, buckled, pistol'd, dirk'd and sworded,—blustering about the Children of the Mist, and gathering their ideas of the "land of flood and mountain," from the Surrey theatre version of the Lady of the Lake, and the Covent Garden dramas of Rob Roy and Guy Mannering, "fright the isle from her propriety." Many a milliner, or *millinerette*, from the neighbourhood of Temple Bar or Charing Cross, decked out in tartan gowns, tartan

bonnets, tartan boots, and with tartan parasols, —is on an excursion for the purpose of fancying herself on Loch Cateran—

“ A guardian Naiad of the *Strand*.”

Plodding antiquaries,—crazy sentimentalists,—silly sight-seers, — romantic view-hunters, — cockney literati,—Bond Street loungers,—all are predatory on Scotland’s magic scenes now, and pay to be guided to where Fitzjames had his first interview with the daughter of Douglas, and to the Coir-nan Uriskin, where the angel “ hymn of Ellen ” was raised to heaven. Groups pic-nic on Rob Roy’s rock, or drink tea on Inch Cailliach. In truth, Watt and Sir Walter have, by means of the paddle and the pen, made to all Loch Lomond, Bealnam-bo, Loch Cateran, the Uaighmor, the Clachan of Aberfoil, Salisbury Craigs, and the Western Isles of Perthshire, familiar as household words.

But to our tale. There is a very wide

difference between admiring the picturesque beauty of a cottage from without, and being domiciled within: in this case the husk is fairer than the *kernel*. For the first few weeks after their arrival at their new residence, Dudley met with a corresponding glow all the warmth of feeling which Constance (happy to escape from the noise and turmoil of society) felt at the beauty of their sweet retired vale; but this was a state of feeling that too soon vanished, for ennui finds entrances into every scene when the gloss of novelty is over. A few weeks served to make Ravensworth weary of the confinement to which he had subjected himself; and then he grew peevish with Constance, as though *she* were the cause of this temporary and wearying northern exile. He gradually grew discontented at all the internal deficiencies about him, and pined for the luxuries of home, and the *agrémens* of general society. He discovered that the windows rattled,—that the chimneys smoked,—that



the doors would not close,—that the meals were cheerless, early, and unpunctual ; and that the dining-room was a cell, the cottage a hut ! Out of doors, too, the causes of discontent were equally great. The wind was never at rest, except to give the mists a turn. The day came too soon, and the evening light went to rest too rapidly ; there was something tiresomely monotonous in the cry of the eagle, and irritatingly startling in the unwarned burst of the red deer ! The charm of novelty was over, and all around was familiar.

Dudley became weary of the insipidity and dulness of the monotonous life to which he had subjected himself, and was now impatient to return to London. Constance cheerfully assented ; for with her, too, there was an aching wish for change. It was not a craving for gaiety that her spirit yearned for ; it was for social intercourse, the communion of even one kindred soul. While Dudley was with her, Constance

wanted no other society ; but he now usually left her to spend the mornings alone. They were generally passed, indeed, in recollections which could not be shared by a stranger ; yet there are seasons when the oppressed heart will borrow aid from the cheerfulness of others. It was then that she fervently wished that she possessed one friend, or even companion, to cheer her too lonely hours. She thought of the many friendships shown to her in her days of innocence, till —

——— “ softness crept  
Into those eyes, which like an infant’s wept.”

It was now decided that they should only remain one fortnight longer, to be present at a Highland gathering, where the sports were to consist of hurling the stone, throwing the hammer, foot racing, ending with a dinner and a ball, at which all the neighbourhood were to be present, and of which Mrs. Lumsden, Lady Atherley’s nearest neighbour, was a pa-

troness : but chance often overturns our wisest plans, or, as Burns expresses it —

“ The best laid schemes of mice and men,  
Gang aft a gley.”

The arrival of two strangers of note, with their carriages, horses, and servants, had created a general commotion in the neighbourhood. The laird's family, as the Lumsdens of Loch Swinnie, were called, were “away north,” when Lady Atherley and Ravensworth arrived at Glengaelloch ; but the day after their return, they left cards at the cottage. Lady Atherley had returned the visit, but with such “an exchange of cards,” as led to no meeting; all civilities had ended. In her rambles she had more than once encountered them ; on these occasions, however, a slight bow was all the recognition that ensued. At first, Constance, not disposed to view her neighbours with a fastidious eye, doubted, or rather tried to doubt, how far the coolness was intentional,

when a circumstance occurred that decided the question. One day, accompanied by Dudley, she entered a shop,—the one comprehensive shop of the village,—just at the moment Mrs. and Miss Lumsden were occupied in making a purchase. Constance slightly coloured;—Mrs. Lumsden civilly made way, gave a formal curtsey, and, with her daughter, passed to the other side of the universal mart, and hurried out. Constance felt deeply wounded. Anxious to contribute to Ravensworth's amusement, she had encouraged his remaining until after the meeting, and had on the previous day written to Mrs. Lumsden to request tickets for the dinner and ball; no answer had been received, and she had fully anticipated receiving them on this unexpected meeting. Dudley broke the silence. The rising in Constance's throat scarcely allowed her to articulate. Ravensworth bit his lips till the blood came; and they walked on.

The past, the present, and the future, like

adverse currents, met within her brain, and eddied there in wild confusion. There is no greater retribution that falls upon female errors than the desertion of female friends, and none of so sure a visitation.

“No,—gayer insects fluttering by  
Ne’er droop the wing o’er those that die:  
And lovelier things have mercy shown  
To every failing but their own,  
And every woe a tear can claim  
Except an erring sister’s shame.”

Constance had experienced this: the time had been when friends and relatives would have crowded round her in weal or woe. Where were they now? One by one had deserted her. Had she not felt that she deserved the cold hand and the averted eye, she might have despised the world’s opinion, but she was not seared sufficiently, nor her heart hardened, to brave its scorn. Deep and sincere remorse pressed upon her. Too mild to murmur, too gentle to resist, she suffered all in silence; the humbled creature uttered not a syllable of

complaint ; from the loneliness of her position, destitute as she was of relatives, almost of acquaintances, she felt herself an isolated being.

It was with the greatest reluctance, and with tears in her eyes that on the occasion we have alluded to, she confessed to her husband the mortification she felt at the slights thrown upon her ; at the neglect of her dear and early friends ; at being an outcast from society.

“ Pshaw, Constance ! ” said Dudley, turning away ; “ is this all ? why reproach *me* ? why torment *me* with useless regrets ? ” his lip quivered, his countenance varied ; he hastily trod the apartment.

“ Did I ever offer you a reproach ? ” replied Constance, shrinking.

“ I did not say you did,” he replied, “ but there are in the tears of some women more cutting reproaches than in the imprecations of others. You know I hate to see you shed tears.”

“You seldom see me shed them : I rein my feelings better ; yes, *once I did*, and the remembrance haunts me still.” This reproach was no sooner uttered, than she felt how ungenerous she had been, and in a soft relenting voice, said, “Forgive me, forgive me, dearest !”

The sternness of Ravensworth’s brow gradually relaxed, conscious of his own injustice, he felt that he had wronged his wife ; and, anxious to make an atonement, folded her in his arms. Constance replied by a fond embrace.

“Regard me with your former confidence,” said Dudley, “and all will be well !”

“Believe me,” replied Constance tenderly, “I will ! I will conquer every emotion. I will endeavour to be all you wish.”

“Thou art thyself, dearest,” said Dudley, subdued by the kindness of her voice and manner. These and many other expressions of endearment passed between them, and thus

for the present the cloud was chased away ; alas ! only too soon to revisit them again.

The following day saw their departure from Glengaelloch. After devoting a few days to Edinburgh, they proceeded slowly towards England. Nothing of any consequence happened during the first nine days of their journey, for in those days railroads were only in the future tense. As they approached within two stages of the metropolis, Ravensworth's spirits became elated, and Constance shared his gratification ; but her joy speedily gave way to feelings of a very different order. Towards the end of the day, the carriage, owing to the negligence of the post-boys, came in violent contact with a waggon, and was overturned. Constance was considerably hurt, and was compelled to alight at a miserable wayside public-house, where the Robin Hood swings and creaks its invitation to man and beast.

Just as Ravensworth was about to despatch



the post-boy to London for surgical assistance, a carriage stopped at the door, attracted by the crowd assembled round the broken vehicle, which the village blacksmith was trying to "put to rights."

"What has happened?" cried a voice from within the newly-arrived carriage—"can I be of any service?"

Ravensworth, who was at the door, fancied he recognised the voice, and approached,—  
"Darval!" "Ravensworth!" exclaimed the two together.

Darval alighted.

"I hope," said he, "Lady Atherley has not suffered from the accident?"

"A little bruised and shaken, but I trust nothing of consequence," replied Dudley.

"Pray make use of my carriage," continued Darval; "the clamour of this wretched inn will distract Lady Atherley."

After much preliminary matter it was finally arranged that Lady Atherley and her

maid should proceed to London in Darval's carriage, and that he and Sir Dudley should follow the moment the broken carriage was sufficiently repaired for the journey.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## LADY ATHERLEY UNHAPPY.

Ever note, Lucilius,  
When love begins to sicken and decay,  
It useth an enforced ceremony ;  
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith.  
*Julius Cæsar.*

Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,  
And Constance was beloved no more,—  
'Tis an old tale, and often told.  
*Marmion.*

BYRON says,

“ Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart,  
’Tis woman’s whole existence !”

True it is, that the passion which makes up the  
whole of a woman’s existence, is but one among

the many which constitute that of a man ; and though men may love as passionately, they seldom love as disinterestedly, and never as devotedly. With men, love takes its place in the ranks of the many passions which are gathered in their breasts ; with women, it is the chief, and gives its tone to all their thoughts and feelings.

Constance one afternoon, on their return to England, had been led to expect Dudley at two o'clock ; when the clock struck half-past three, she began to experience the most painful anxiety. Ravensworth had never before forfeited his word. Whenever he had promised to be at home at a particular hour, at that hour he had invariably returned. She chided herself for her impatience, and conceived numerous excuses for him. Four o'clock came, and no tidings of him. She went to the piano, with a view of distracting her thoughts, but they " would not be commanded ;" she was unable to fix herself to

any favourite air. The clock struck five: "this is strange and unkind," thought Constance, but she instantly checked the thoughts; for she would not encourage the idea of his unkindness for an instant. She opened one of Byron's volumes, which, however, failed to interest her, except painfully; still she kept her eyes fixed upon its pages until the clock struck six. She arose, and paced the room, in a hurried search after patience and firmness; at one time she felt she was neglected, at the next she would inwardly chide herself for attaching danger or neglect to an absence which some chance and unavoidable circumstance had suddenly occasioned. Constance rang the bell.

"Did Sir Dudley leave any message for me?"

"No, my Lady."

"Did he say when he should return?"

"No, my Lady."

"Did he say whether he dined at home?"

“ No, my Lady.”

“ Did he order his horses ?”

“ No, my Lady.”

The consequential respondent in powder was about to retire, when it occurred to him that a little mystification would promote him in the estimation of his mistress. “ Sir Dudley went into his room to answer a note, brought by a French person.”

Lady Atherley paused.

“ Very well, Thomas, let me know when your master returns.”

Constance walked her anxious watch, in a state of mind painful and perplexing in the extreme ; her fears triumphed over her reason ; a thousand apprehensions were conceived in an instant ; some accident she now felt sure had occurred, or he certainly would have apprised her of the cause of his absence, or returned home. She rang the bell, and desired the footman to get into the first coach he met, and hasten to White’s.

“Simply inquire if Sir Dudley is there, and return to me as quickly as possible.” The servant stared, but immediately proceeded on his errand. Constance now opened the window, and went out on the balcony, listening to every footstep and vehicle that approached. At length a coach stopped at the portico; she flew to the room door; a single knock was given, and her heart sank within her; the door was opened. The footman entered to convey the intelligence that Sir Dudley had left White’s an hour before.

“Hark!” cried Constance; “I heard a carriage!” darting eagerly to the window, as a coach drove up to the door; the coachman slowly descended from the box, and knocked loudly. Constance could scarcely breathe, but when, on the door being opened, she saw Dudley alight, she sank down upon a chair, offering up her silent gratitude. Before she had risen Dudley entered the room, and seeing her distress embraced her affectionately :

For some moments Constance was unable to speak.

“Dearest !” said Constance, at length, faintly ; “ you look ill, I fear something dreadful has occurred !”

“ No : nothing of importance.”

“ Say that nothing serious has happened,” continued Constance anxiously.

“ Nothing has happened, upon my honour !” She still watched his countenance, still urged her fears. He kindly but coldly replied to her passionate fervour, and deeply wounded by the alteration of his manner, she fixed on him a look of sadness, and turned away with a deep sigh. How truly might she in her heart’s disappointment have exclaimed, “ Have I not tried and striven, and failed to bind one true heart unto me, whereon my own might find a resting place, a home for all its burden of affections !” She had consumed her existence in vain yearnings for some object to call forth the full devotions



of her nature ; she had given her heart to one who had repaid her affection with apathy, her hopes with disappointment. Poor Constance ! with what humiliation did she feel the symptoms of coldness, the forced manner, the unconcealed indifference of Ravensworth ; and now the truth flashed upon her mind ; she felt that he had married her from a point of honour — from pity ! She revolted from the idea of being a burthen to him ; or of owing to his commiseration that which his love denied. “ Ah ! ” writes Madame de Sevigné, “ ah jamais, jamais, je ne serai pas aimée comme j’aime ! ” such a feeling took possession of Constance.

Constance was not slow in remarking the gradual advance of coolness and reserve betrayed through the manner of Ravensworth towards her ; and though she was most sedulous in banishing her sad surmises, in spite of her best efforts to repel them they still obtruded themselves on her attention ! At

first she decided on seeking an explanation, but there was something in the character of Ravensworth which withheld her from disclosing to him her suspicions; she shrank from confiding her distrust and misgiving to one so proud and tenacious as Dudley. Should the justice of her terrors be acknowledged, what a cloud of misery would burst over her head—believing herself to be, as she had believed, the only object of his affection, and knowing that she had no other earthly tie to bind her to the world. Then came the corroding thought, “that had he married a woman whom he respected, on *her* he would have lavished his whole heart.” Silence, and the making herself the exorcist of the demon suspicion, was her only alternative, and it was one which suited but too well her character, now subdued and bowed down to the dust by humiliation and grief. She tried to lay the “flattering unction to her soul” that a too anxious love had conjured up in her breast evils which existed

not ; but she never could absolve herself from the inward conviction, that her own conduct had destroyed her power of securing a permanent and respectful affection. Then, too, the very steadiness and ardour of her feelings, acting as a constant reproach to Ravensworth, instead of recalling his wandering feelings, only irritated and repulsed them.

Strong in her own love, Lady Atherley forgot that, by moving in the society of the heartless and the dissipated, her defenceless position as a neglected wife made her an object too interesting to be considered with indifference by the flatterers that surrounded her. The voice of admiration which everywhere pursued her did not excite in her a momentary gratification. Amongst those whose attentions, under the name of friendship to her husband, had attracted the remark of the world, was Sidney Darval. The approach to intimacy, though it had been keenly remarked by others, and watchfully recorded, had been so gradual, that not a

thought ever crossed Constance's mind as to the danger that lurked in such an intercourse. It is true that, as her husband's friend, he was ever by her side—at the drive, the dinner, or the *soirée*, but his manner was perfectly unobtrusive.

Sidney Darval was a most fascinating man, and to a very prepossessing person was added a polished manner, that won at once the regard and attention of those who conversed with him. He had travelled much, and resided long abroad, and had been a cherished favourite at foreign courts. In Paris he had been formerly thrown into Dudley's society, and though he had there seen but little of him, the renewal of their acquaintance on the road to London, and under the circumstance we recorded in our last chapter, was an unexpected pleasure. An intimacy immediately ensued, and Ravensworth and Darval soon became great friends, or what the world calls such. To the *blasé* Ravensworth, the society of Darval pos-

sessed a charm of no ordinary kind. Darval was a professed man of pleasure. With a cool and calculating head, he possessed a corrupt heart; and, without any principles of honour, was egregiously vain of his family and fortune. The ruling passion of his life was to succeed with the sex; he lived but for "*bonnes fortunes*." Spoiled by his success on the Continent, where his wealth and personal attractions had rendered him irresistible, he returned to England with the conqueror's motto, "*Veni, vidi, vici*." His boast was that he had never yet found a woman who could resist his seductive attractions and attentions. As an enthusiastic admirer of female beauty, that of his friend's wife struck him with admiration, and in a little time excited in him a passion. Specious and insinuating in his address, he ever bore towards Constance the semblance of being the possessor of the strictest virtue. His conversations were calculated to encourage her confidence, though at the same time this accomplished dis-

sembler was with the greatest art attempting to infuse into her mind the poison of his pernicious sentiments. He possessed the finished qualities of an accomplished scoundrel; had a good share of impudence, not a little hypocrisy, unbounded falsehood, and a cool pertinacity not easily to be rebuffed.

But to return to Ravensworth; a face less beautiful, a form less perfect, a mind less elevated, and a heart less pure, had, in truth, diverted his passion, (for we will not contaminate the word love,) from the confiding Constance. Emilie St. Phar, then a distinguished *danseuse*, had dazzled and won him! Lost amidst the fashionable mazes of error, led into every species of dissipation, drawn into a vortex of extravagant follies, sunk into degradation, he, day after day, more submissively yielded to the dangerous and seductive influence of a designing woman. Ravensworth, the once noble, high-minded Ravensworth, drank deep of the poisoned cup of pleasure, and became

a slave to the fascinations of a heartless, foreign coquette. The wily ensnarer held dominion over her victim, and commanded with all the tyranny of vice. Two months had passed, of which every day had found him encircled by the spells of the enchantress. At home, Dudley evinced a restlessness of spirit, which nothing could allay; an irritability of temper, which made him fretfully desire constant change. In his home he appeared a stranger; at times, when alone, he resolved "to be a wiser and a better man;" but to make resolutions in the absence of a devoted being, and put them in practice in her presence, are widely different! Resolutions thus formed on impulse, and not on principle, vanished as rapidly as they were formed.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE MILLINER.

I, who should shield thy unprotected head,  
'Tis I—who doom thee to severest pains!—  
Of all thy gifts, lo! these the bitter gains!  
Ah! reft of every friend, save me alone,  
I swell thy tear, I deepen every groan,  
I,—to whom nought on earth,—but hopeless life remains.  
SOTHEY.

Ad humum mœrore gravi deducit et angit.  
HOR. *Ars Poet.* V. 110.

Grief wrings her soul, and binds it down to earth.  
FRANCIS.

WE tarry in London. And here we must enter upon a new scene.

Extended at full length upon an easy couch, lay a middle-aged though still beautiful woman, a perfect specimen of “*la femme*



*à la mode.*" In her house was everything in the very best taste. "Rosalie, va donc voir quelle heure il est à la pendule du salon, ma montre est arrêtée."

"Midi moins un quart, Madame," said the trusty Abigail on her return.

"Déjà !"

"Oui, Madame."

"Rosalie, je n'y suis pour personne ; entendez vous ?"

"Oui, Madame," replied the attentive *femme-de-chambre*.

These instructions were scarcely given when the door bell was rung, and Madame Anastasie almost immediately afterwards announced. How would it be possible to refuse Madame Anastasie, with her splendid assortment of shawls, lace, furs, ribbons, silks, velvets, levantines, figured muslins, China crape, gros de Naples, brocaded silks, and all the paraphernalia of a milliner's warehouse, compressed into an oiled-skin basket box.

“ Oh, good morning ! ” said Madame de la Minauderie, rising languidly from her sofa. “ What beautiful lace ! but really I am so poor now, that, ”—

“ Not of the least consequence, ” interrupted Madame Anastasie, “ you look truly charming in that pelerine ! ” Madame de la Minauderie smiled languidly. “ But my lady, do look at this beautiful scarf ; I have just bought it *à bien bon marché* for Sir Dudley Ravensworth. Madame le Grand, who brought it from Paris, would scarcely let me have it. ‘ C’est tout ce qu’il y a de plus nouveau. ’ ”

“ Ah, for Lady Atherley ! I have a note for her. Are you going to Brook Street ? ”

“ No Madame. I go, but I depend upon your discretion, to the *Marché au foin*,—Haymarket. Voilà l’adresse, Mademoiselle Emilie St. Phar, No. 60, Haymarket. ”

“ Charming ! ” replied the Baronne, “ the immaculate Dudley ! c’est vraiment une aventure délicieuse. ”

“ Mais, Madame, je me fie à votre discrétion,” said Madame Anastasie.

“ Vous pouvez y compter ;” responded the Baroness.

Madame la Baronne de la Minauderie's character may be easily described in the words of Marmontel. “ Une coquette est un tyran qui veut tout asservir pour le seul plaisir d'avoir des esclaves. D'elle-même idolâtre, tout le reste ne lui est rien ; son orgueil se fait un jeu de notre foiblesse et un triomphe de nos tourmens : ses regards mentent, sa bouche trompe, son langage et sa conduite ne sont qu'un tissu de pièges, ses graces sont autant de sirènes, ses charmes autant de poisons.” With an unconquerable spirit of coquetry she united a playful imagination, her person was very beautiful, and she had a fascination of manner that made her irresistible ; her whole aim was “ universal suffrage,” her besetting passion an unlimited desire of general admiration ; the realms of her conquest, like the

views of the Spartan Agesilaus, knew no boundary. She was, indeed, a very pretty woman, with small but regular features, and with the most brilliant blue eyes, which she knew how to use with the greatest effect; her mouth was peculiarly beautiful, and her smile *spirituelle* to a degree; added to these advantages, there was a joyousness, a *gaieté de cœur*, about her, an unceasing cheerfulness of disposition, that communicated itself to all around. She could not live without the additional excitement of a few quarrels and *tracasseries* on hand. Adolphe de la Minauderie, her husband, possessed that self-sufficiency which rendered him the most favoured of Heaven's creatures, in his own eyes.

In early life, Madame la Baronne, née de Blaquièrre, had had a grand sentiment for the young Achille Rougemont, Capitaine du dixième régiment d'hussards; they had plighted their faith, and were about to be united, when the escape of "L'homme du siècle" opened a fresh

war with Europe. Achille took leave of his affianced, and they mutually vowed that, if death should overtake either, the other would offer up the self-sacrifice of life. The battle of Waterloo had numbered Achille Rougemont as one of its victims, he had fallen in a gallant charge; the news had reached Paris, and Mademoiselle de Blaquière remembered her vow. Determined to emulate the Hindoo widow, she formed a funeral pile, consisting of all Achille's billets-doux, and, approaching it with her pet, "Chéri," a young King Charles's spaniel he had presented to her, set fire to the pile. For some time she bore the trial with fortitude, but, alas, her resolution gave way before the scorching flames, and to the disgrace of sentiment be it recorded, the only immolated victim at the altar of love was the miserable quadruped. Another event had occurred to chequer her life, when aux Eaux. Two young German Counts, who aspired to her hand, accidentally encountered one another

at the residence of the fair de Blaquièrre. To settle their dispute rapier in hand would have committed the object of their devotion; they therefore determined to arrange the affair in a different manner. Two glasses of Johannisberg were provided, one containing a deadly poison; they drew lots, and pledged the health of the divine Eloïse. The survivor, however, of this rhenish duel was after all rejected by the lady.

Madame de la Minauderie had once been universally envied for her beauty, and even after her personal attractions had lost much of their early lustre, and of "the bloom of young desire, the purple light of love," the elegance of her taste, the fascination of her manners, the charm of her accomplishments, caused her still to shine as a brilliant star in the hemisphere of fashion.

Lady Atherley was at this time indulging, through Madame de la Minauderie, in that luxury so baneful to all young married women, the dangerous pleasure of an unreserved con-

fidence in what is termed a bosom friend. The ruin of wedded happiness may too often be ascribed to such injudicious attachments or *attachées*. To what purpose can it conduce to discuss a husband's failings, or the vexations which may be casually endured from or through him, unless to irritate sensibilities, and keep the minds and tempers in a state of restlessness?

Ravensworth's conduct was too apparent to escape Madame de la Minauderie's observation; and Constance's tearful eyes evinced her own painful sense of it. Encouraged by the sympathy of her friend, she indiscreetly related every trifling incident which had occurred of a disagreeable nature. Instead of healing the wound a tender mind had suffered, La Baronne aggravated every trivial vexation into a real sorrow, and designated many venial errors and infirmities as wanton outrages and consummate cruelties. On one occasion, when the Baroness had gracefully *innuendoed* Dudley's

character away, and then sympathised with Constance's distress, Lady Atherley, overcome with the Iago-like art of her friend, flung herself upon her couch, pretending sleepiness, but in reality for the purpose of escaping the annoyance of that consolation which administered no relief. La Baronne insisted upon watching her slumbers, and positively refused to quit her chamber.

The faithful Viney, believing her Lady to be asleep, began a conversation in an audible whisper.

“What can be the matter, Ma'am, between my master and my lady? there's been such a *to do* lately.”

“Hush!” said La Baronne, evidently desirous to hear more.

“Well! I always thought they would fall out — such hot love generally gets the soonest cold; they *do* say, in the servants' hall, that master is the greatest Don Jovanni in the world.”



“ Silence, silence ! your lady is awake ; she ’ll hear you.”

“ Oh no ! She ’s fast asleep,” replied the persevering Abigail. “ ’Tis a shocking thing, my Lady Baroness, that she should be so married. She ’s the sweetest, best-tempered creature in the world ; and he, the profligate wretch, has a nasty Frenchified *ma’am* — (them foreigners are no better than they should be, barring your Ladyship’s presence). Shame upon him !”

“ Poor creature,” responded the Baroness.

“ Poor creature, indeed, Madame ; her first husband, Lord Atherley, never let my lady have any peace — teaze, teaze, continually ; and now her second neglects her for a tawdry, painted, gawky opera-dancer, Mademoiselle St. Far, as they call her.

Lady Atherley’s agony could no longer be suppressed ; she burst into a flood of tears ; but with the usual assistance of vinaigrettes and Eau de Cologne, soon recovered, when the Baroness departed, urging Constance to calm

herself, and carrying away with her the confirmation of Madame Anastasie's scandal, which furnished a world of excitement to this mischievous lady.

Ravensworth returned home; he heard of Constance's illness; her pale dejected countenance too plainly told him that she was neither in health nor happiness; he folded her in his arms, and besought her to tell him the cause of her anxiety; Constance assured him that there was none; but her averted eye and half-stifled sobs gave little confirmation to her words.

Lady Atherley and Ravensworth continued to behave towards each other with civility instead of tenderness, and with attention instead of confidence. The conversation Constance had overheard between Madame de la Minauderie and Mrs. Viney, cruelly dispossessed her mind of repose, and induced her thenceforth to view her husband's every action with jealous suspicion. Conscious of past severity, Dudley

endeavoured to conciliate his wife's affection, and their happiness soon assumed a more favourable appearance when this fair promise was interrupted by an unfortunate incident.

Lady Atherley was one morning reflecting in solitude over her destiny, when she was surprised by an early visit from Madame de la Minauderie. Ravensworth had just quitted her for the avowed purpose of going to a committee of the House of Commons.

"Bon jour, ma bonne amie," said La Baronne entering; "comment ça va-t-il ce matin?"

"Ça va bien," replied Constance; "et toi?"

"Très-bien, je te remercie, a thousand thanks for this friendly admission; it was rather unreasonable to expect to be let in at this early hour. J'ai tant de choses à te dire, j'ai besoin de ton goût, de tes conseils; mais ma chère Constance, qu'elle jolie toilette! un goût si exquis! une simplicité! tu es mise comme une ange."

All this time was the Baroness admiring herself in the glass over the chimney-piece.

“ Y avait-il beaucoup de monde chez Lady Glanville hier au soir ? ”

“ Il y en avait trop, une centaine de personnes de moins, et le bal aurait été parfait.”

Madame de la Minauderie had come full of importance to consult with Constance on the subject of a dress for a ball, which was to take place the following week at the Russian Ambassador's. “ It is so unfortunate,” she remarked, “ that I am en demi deuil ; Adolphe says, there is no possibility of my avoiding it. Mais à propos de ton Monsieur d'hier, Darval, sais-tu, ma petite, qu'il est très bien ? ”

“ Mr. Darval ! ” replied Lady Atherley ; “ he is one of my husband's best friends.”

“ Fais donc l'ignorante, petite hypocrite, tu ne le connais pas, n'est ce pas ? ” continued the Baroness in a tone of badinage.

“ We often see Mr. Darval.”

“ Il est plein d'esprit.”

“ My husband likes his society very much,” said Lady Atherley, calmly.

“Original un peu, seulement.”

“Some disappointment in early life,” rejoined Lady Atherley, “has made Mr. Darval unhappy.”

“Oh oui, je sais; ils sont tous comme cela, ces jeunes gens qui ont de beaux fronts pâles et de grands yeux noirs : à les entendre, leur cœur est un cimetière, où ils ont enterré toutes les joies et toutes les esperances de la vie,” exclaimed the Baroness in a mock heroic style.

“Tu plaisantes, ma chère. But the time wears ; I expect Ravensworth home soon from his committee.”

The Baroness now besought Lady Atherley to accompany her to Madame Chamouillet, the French Marchande de Modes, where they might devise some becoming dress, and decide upon the important point, whether crape, silk, or satin should be chosen. They soon reached the temple of *ton*, situated in the very centre of a fashionable street in the most fashionable part of the metropolis.

The contents of the magasin were displayed, every carton was opened,—silks, satins, and crapes, but nothing suited; white was not mourning enough,—black too sombre,—grey unbecoming.

Madame Chamouillet and her daughter Eugénie, were indefatigable “dans leur métier.” “Voilà! my Lady, un corsage à la Psyché, tout-à-fait ravissant; voilà une robe, mille fois plus jolie que l’amour, qui fait les délices de tout Paris. Si my Lady veut entrer par ici elle verra tout ce qu’il y a de nouveau.—Mademoiselle Victorine, show the ladies the last new dresses from Paris.”

Lady Atherley and the Baroness entered the room. By one of those unaccountable freaks of fortune which none can understand, the former approached the table; but what an object presented itself to her eyes! an ashy paleness stole over her features, sudden, lightning-like conviction flashed on her mind; she

was horror-struck. La Baronne glanced towards the spot on which her eye had rested, "the damning proof" was before her; an order for a dress in the well-known handwriting of Ravensworth directed to be sent to Mademoiselle St. Phar. Every object swam before Constance's eyes as in a mist; every sound fell unheeded on her ear; one faint groan escaped her, and she staggered against the door, to which she clung for support: she was fainting, and would have fallen, but for the timely assistance of Mademoiselle Eugénie, who employed herself assiduously in bathing her temples with Eau de Cologne. When she recovered, and the first burst of anguish was over, she took La Baronne's arm and descended to the carriage. On reaching home, she took leave of Madame de la Minauderie, and sought the solitude of her own chamber.

"Alas!" she inwardly exclaimed, with that blindness of judgment by which we are all more or less influenced, and which throws

our misfortunes into the strongest light and our errors into the shade, “what have I done to merit this fate?” To doubt now was impossible; the wretched conviction had been sufficiently brought home to her. She had been deceived; the barbed sting of outraged affection rankled at her heart; the fabric of happiness she had once fondly believed secure had been annihilated: there wanted but this to withdraw from her all that had previously soothed her in her humiliation and sorrow. What consolation could now be offered to the heart thus thrown back upon itself, which, though hopeless, must still love; though condemning, could still adore; though “broken, could brokenly live on?” Constance knelt down and prayed;—her prayer was for patience, for direction, and support. This was the severest pang of all; and though she prayed long and fervently, she still wept like a child. Dark thoughts—gloomy and horrible visions—took possession of her mind; all around was



arid and barren. Deserted by all the bright hopes that once had thronged about her path, she felt that despair was her portion for the rest of her life, and that the world was now desolate for her. Humbled by the consciousness of the position which she held in society, she shrank from the gaze of strangers; she felt that every eye that rested on her was full of scorn or pity: she read contempt in many an indifferent look, and heard reproach in words which conveyed it to no other ear. All was dark and desolate; despair, sorrow, and remorse by turns struggled for the mastery, and with feelings wound up to the greatest degree of excitement by the shock that had wrecked her dearest hopes, she remained in a state bordering on madness. Hope could afford no solace, for the dreadful certainty which accompanied the discovery of her husband's violated fidelity, told her there was no remedy for the wretchedness which oppressed her. The tormenting and harassing reflection haunted every

thought. She felt that he for whom she had sacrificed everything in this world — he for whom only she had lived — had broken every tie of love, had blighted all her hopes, outraged her affections, and joined the herd of the world in shunning her for “having loved not wisely, but too well !”

The reviewal of the past month offered anything but pleasurable sensations to Ravensworth ; for although he had witnessed nothing that could justify any suspicion of Darval, the spirit that took possession of his mind bore a near affinity to jealousy. His heart misgave him when he thought of the numerous opportunities to which his neglect of Lady Atherley, and devotion to the St. Phar, had exposed her. He reflected on the seductive arts of Darval ; on the abstraction and lowness of spirits which Lady Atherley betrayed ; the agitated demeanour of Sidney on many occasions, his unceasing attentions ; the gentleness with which those attentions, too, were received — all gave

rise to the most uneasy sensations. Had Darval ever betrayed in his manner to Constance, or by any impassioned language, the familiarity and freedom so frequent yet so offensive in men, she would have shuddered and escaped from it. He never breathed a syllable to her that her husband might not have heard. The respect, at once so refined and flattering; the devotion, which converted her wishes into commands; the freedom from all gross adulation or flippant protestation, had gained her entire confidence.

Return we to this arch hypocrite;—return we to him.

Darval, bursting inwardly with mortification and anger at finding, after all the pains he had taken to entangle Constance's affection, that his power over her was not established, —his plan of revenge was speedily formed. Another motive urged him on:—jealousy, and hatred for Dudley, who had supplanted him with the St. Phar. In Madame de la Minau-

derie he had found a most able coadjutress. They knew that Lady Atherley was affected with jealousy ; anonymous letters had informed her of the power a certain *chère amie* had gained over her husband's mind. Success, beyond his most sanguine hopes, seemed about to reward the Machiavelian Darval, who had heard the affair at the milliner's from Madame de la Minauderie, and had come from her to make inquiries after Lady Atherley's health. Constance received him with agitation and embarrassment, which he at once obviated, by declaring that he had sought her to proffer the services of a respectful and sincere friend. After a short silence he asked—

“Does not Lady Atherley admit too prematurely a vague and distracting suspicion to take possession of her better mind ?”

But it would be long and tedious to relate the insidious arguments advanced by Darval to confirm the sentiments of regard that he

had succeeded in exciting. His beguiling sophistry was received as the salutary counsel of one impelled by the tender anxiety of friendship. Bewildered by the weight of misery that pressed so heavily upon her, Constance at length replied with emotion :—

“ Can I want any other proof ? No, no ! ” she added, with tears in her eyes. “ All that remains for me is, to pray for patience to bear this affliction. Oh, for one true friend to whom I could unburthen my soul ! ”

“ Lady Atherley ! look, — call me but your friend ! ” replied Darval, in a more impassioned manner.

“ Be worthy of the title, and I will ever think of you as such. ”

Lady Atherley wept bitterly. Darval sprang towards her, and, kneeling before her, took her struggling yet almost lifeless hand, and pressed it to his lips.

“ Why refuse to listen to me ? you *must* hear me ! ”

“ Rise, Mr. Darval ! ” said Constance, recovering from her astonishment. At that moment the doors were suddenly thrown open, and Ravensworth, with a countenance of mingled horror and consternation, entered the room. Darval rose hastily from his knees, and confronted Dudley with an audacious stare. He at once assumed a self-sufficient air of mingled triumph and malice. A curse “ not loud but deep,” was on his lips. Indignation shot from the dark eyes of Ravensworth ; there was a stinging rebuke in his look, which at once reduced Darval to silence. Rage seemed to impede his utterance.

“ Leave me ! ” said Constance, recovering her senses.

“ I obey *Lady Atherley*’s commands ! ” said Darval, smiling bitterly ; adding in a cutting tone, “ Sir Dudley, for the present we part ; when next we meet, I trust we shall not be subject to interruption.”

Without giving time for a reply, he took his hat and left the room.

At first a sudden flush crimsoned Ravensworth's forehead and face, which was succeeded by a deadly paleness. At length he spoke,—but wildly; his lips quivered, his voice was hollow with emotion, and deep resentment clung to his heart. Constance marked the struggles of his mind, and trembled for the result. He stood up like a statue erected to horror!

Constance gazed on him with a calm air of dignity, mingled with a look of innocence, and with such an expression of imploring sweetness and guilelessness, that, had it not been for the evidence of his senses, he would have thrown himself at her feet, and implored her forgiveness for his unjust suspicions! But the conviction of her treachery and guilt stifled every softer feeling within him. He gazed upon her beauty,—that beauty which had been so fatal to his and to her peace: he could hardly bring himself to believe (so alive are we to self-inju-

ries in love) that so angelic a face was the deceitful index of a betraying mind.

“Dudley!” said Constance, in a sad but calm voice,—“though appearances are against me, I am still your own Constance! As my words are truth, so help me Heaven!”

“Insolent, heartless scoundrel!” muttered Ravensworth. “Idiot that I was to admit him to my house! This is the climax!” he exclaimed, while, with frantic violence, he paced the room. He paused, and then retiring to his library, indulged in all the indignation with which his bosom laboured. He cursed the hour when honour, activity, and fame had been sacrificed for a worthless toy;—execrated the destroyer of his happiness; and, in a phrenzy of desperation,—his brain fired to madness,—looked forward with a savage joy to the hour which should be the last to one or both of them.

Then, in the agony of remorse, heart-struck



and miserable, he stood motionless,—his cheek was pale, his misery full, his desolation complete: with a haggard hope he sought to persuade himself that the “damning proof,” which had plunged him in wretchedness and despair was unreal! But Darval, *on his knees*, pressing his wife’s hands with his lips!—the maddening conviction was established. The open consciousness of degradation,—the anguish of tormenting jealousy, or humiliation returned; and Dudley sought a refuge from his feelings in a challenge to Darval. Within two hours, Ravensworth, attended by a friend, had set off for France.

## CHAPTER XV.

## DUEL—DEATH OF DUDLEY.

“ Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange, eventful history.”

SHAKSPEARE.

It was a beautiful afternoon in July, when a crowd of the principal residents in, and visitors to, that eminently respectable receptacle for English swindlers, Boulogne, was assembled upon the pier to enjoy their principal amusement, that of witnessing the arrival of the English Steam-boat. This favourite resort was crowded with a heterogeneous mass, English and French, male and female. *There* might be seen the Parisian *femme à la mode*. She puts forth no dazzling colours, her dress is of a material well chosen; on her feet a pair of Cinderella slippers, the sandal-strings crossing

a stocking of exquisite fineness; her cachmere folded in a manner of her own, to show the most perfect proportions of form; here and there, a specimen of the aristocracy of the old *régime*; with a few well-whiskered mustachioed personages of the present time. Mingled with these, were evident importations from the vicinity of Bow-Bells:—

“ Bagatelle from Clerkenwell,  
Elegance from Aldgate,  
Modish airs from Wapping Stairs,  
And wit from Norton Falgate;  
*Comme-il-faut* from Butcher Row,  
All are in commotion;  
All incline, like deviled swine,  
To nuzzle through the ocean.”

Groups of our own countrymen and women might be seen, with their offspring, in twos and twos, dressed in tartan cloaks, straw-bonnets, and green veils, making loud remarks on the absurdities of the French children, whom the vanity of their mothers had sent abroad in fantastic dresses; little fellows trundling

hoops in the full uniform of the National Guard, others waddling under the mimicry of Don Cossacks, Polish Lancers, and kilted Highlanders. Dissipated-looking free-born sons of Britain, exiled for certain unpaid liabilities, black-balled in every society, just white-washed in England, and about to enjoy lodgings gratis in the Hôtel D'Angleterre, (as the debtors' prison is not inappropriately denominated,) are prevalent.

One group, on the evening alluded to, attracted some little attention: it consisted of a portly, red-faced, little man, with a tall, scraggy lady; both were jostling the crowd, and trying to make their way towards a most formal-looking personage, who was evidently straining her neck to give them the cut direct. They approached — “Lady Margaret, I sincerely hope,” — Lady Margaret looked surprised; “your Ladyship, I fear, forgets Dr. Boyle,—Doctor Boyle of Ratborough; I have had the honour of attending,

I mean visiting the Countess of Atherley ; hope her Ladyship is well. Ah, Sir Alexander ! happy to see you looking so well.” Lady Margaret gave a stiff curtsey, and was about to move, when the Doctor continued, “ Pray allow me to have the honour of presenting Mrs. Boyle ; my dear,—Lady Margaret Graham :—Lady Margaret Graham, Mrs. Doctor Boyle.” A formal curtseying ensued.

“ I have often heard of your Ladyship,” said Mrs. Boyle, “ and am proud—”

The smoke of a steam-packet was now perceived in the distance, seaward ; and a rush to the pier-head put an end to this conversation ; shortly after the vessel hove in sight, and glided rapidly over “ the glad waters of the dark blue sea :”—at length it came alongside the pier. Every neck was elongated, every eye was dilated, to examine the specimens of smuggled humanity about to be landed ; then came all the bustle and annoyances of a dis-

embarkation ; Mathews's song was fully illustrated :

“ Can't touch prog, sick as a dog ;  
Packetem racketem makes pier ;  
Boulogne clerks, custom-house sharks,  
Searchery, lurchery, fee fee.”

It is surprising with what avidity the inmates of watering-places seek that most uninteresting sight — a landing ; to see young and old ladies, sick and squeamish, “ whose souls *have sickened* o'er the heaving wave ; ” then to witness the hopes and fears, the nervousness of passing the custom-house, knowing that contraband articles are hid in bonnets, bustles, boots, muffs — nay, sometimes so concealed as to give the appearance of being in that state “ which women wish to be who love their lords.”

“ Why, my Lady — Lady Margaret Graham ! ” exclaimed Dr. Boyle, “ I declare it is — no it an't — yes it is ; it's very like Sir Dudley Ravensworth.”

Lady Margaret turned round, addressed a few words to Sir Alexander, and left the pier. — And it was Dudley Ravensworth, evidently flushed and excited: he was accompanied by a military-looking man. After some little delay they landed; no sooner had Sir Dudley put his foot upon the pier than he was kindly accosted by his old antipathy, the Ratborough Galen. Time and matrimony had done much for Dr. Boyle; and his warm-hearted offer of any assistance,—for he evidently saw that Ravensworth was “a little dashed”—was received in the same spirit in which it was offered.

The Doctor's presence brought back most vividly and painfully to Dudley's mind scenes of the past. “My dear,” said the Doctor, addressing his *sposa*, “I have a little business; professional, my dear,” laying a stress on the word professional, as he saw the lady tried to extract a pout from her shrivelled lips; “pray

remain with your friends the Manbeys until the French steamer arrives; it was to leave Dover an hour after the Britannia; perhaps I shall be able to induce Sir Dudley to drop in to tea: *au revoir*."

Accompanied by the Doctor, and a gentleman whom Ravensworth introduced as Captain Somerville, they walked towards the end of the pier, where they found the worthy M.D.'s jaunting-car, the identical one mentioned in a former chapter, and in it proceeded to the Doctor's residence in the upper town. There Ravensworth entered briefly into the affair that had brought him to Boulogne, and wrote a letter to Constance, which the Doctor promised to deliver if necessary. At five o'clock the party were seen wending their way towards the Column. The last scene of this earthly tragedy was approaching. The French steamer had arrived, and scarcely had it touched the pier when a female rushed on



deck ; to disembark was the work of a moment : her wild and distracted look, her hurried step, attracted the sympathy and attention of all, and amongst others of the Doctor's wife, who immediately recognised her as Lady Atherley. Mrs. Boyle approached, and, kindly addressing her, informed her that Sir Dudley had just accompanied her husband home. On reaching the Doctor's residence they met the car returning. In reply to the inquiry after them, " I left them near the Column," struck Constance with dread. They entered the carriage. Lady Atherley only reached the fatal spot to find the duel she apprehended already fought, and Ravensworth writhing under the agony of a mortal wound. — What pen can describe this scene ? The wretched Constance, " who had given her peace on earth, her hopes of heaven," for *him*, was in convulsions by his side. She protested her innocence, and a faint smile beamed on Dudley's countenance. In the

paroxysms of despair she threw herself upon the now inanimate body, kissed its cold forehead, and pressed fervently the marble hands to her lips; her cheek was colourless, her lips compressed, her eye dull, fixed, and unmoistened by a tear,—for hers was grief which could not relieve itself by weeping. Utter hopelessness had laid its icy hand upon her heart, had paralysed its springs; a dizziness came over her, and sight, sense, feeling,—all were gone. Assisted by the kind-hearted Doctor, the widowed Constance was removed to the Convent des Sœurs de la Charité.

Lady Margaret and Sir Alexander had been sent for, and, after delivering a suitable homily on the enormity of duelling, and the scandal the affair would produce, sought their daughter. The sight of Lady Margaret, in some measure, recalled Constance to herself; her first burst of grief was terrible. In the extremity of misery the virtuous have one con-

solation; derived from the consciousness that their sufferings are not produced by their own deeds. Constance could not “lay this flattering unction to her soul,” for *one* fatal remembrance had thrown “its bleak shade alike o’er her joys and her woes.” The struggle was too much for her, her soul received a blight from which it never recovered; a fever, accompanied by delirium, was the consequence of the shock she had received; it shook her reason; her once beautiful mind had flown. We throw a veil over her sufferings: weakened by her mental and bodily pangs, she would fall into an involuntary doze—her dreams were peopled with terrible phantoms; now whispering at intervals—“Dudley I am innocent!” now lost in utter apathy! For some days she continued in this dreadful state; at length nature gave way. On the tenth evening her sighs became thick and suffocating, then lighter and more faint:—the once beautiful Constance was no more.

There now remains little to be said; we cannot, however, conclude without giving our readers such information as we possess of the characters that have appeared in our pages. Lady Margaret Graham did not long outlive her daughter; would that we could add "grief had hurried her to a premature grave;" but truth compels us to say she was carried off by one of those very common and numerous "ills that flesh is heir to." Sir Alexander lived on to a green old age. Darval's career of vice flourished for some years; eventually, in a fit of desperation, after a severe loss at play, he fell by his own hand. Miss Cressingham may to this day be seen at one of the neatest suburban villas near Leamington, a happy, contented spinster, with "a hand open as day to melting charity," dispensing good to all around. Miss St. Leger retired to Bath, where for some years she enjoyed "single *wretchedness*," living by "murdering characters just to kill time;"

finally, the disappointed old maid ran away with a German Count, who turned out to be a fortune-hunter. Madame la Baronne de la Minauderie fell a victim in her old age to that devouring flame she had escaped from in her early days : having taken an extra quantity of opium to prepare herself for a fancy-ball, she fell asleep, and her dress catching fire she was found by her maid, who came to announce that the carriage was ready, a blackened corpse. The Dunbars still reside at Avesford Priory, and at Christmas the gentle *Mawia* entertains her guests with an account of the far-famed private theatricals, and the temporary theatre is still occasionally devoted to *tableaux vivans*, and charades. Charley Cyrill, the hoaxer, has turned country-gentleman; and who, to see him now in a black velveteen shooting-jacket, railway pattern trowsers, and gaiter *termini*, could recognise the smart, dashing ex-hussar ! He still enjoys a joke, and glories in the recital of

his "hair-breadth escapes;" and it is shrewdly suspected that when, upon a late occasion, during a contested election, some half dozen voters were shipped off to Scotland, our friend was at least the "putter-up" of the joke. Tom Fauconberg, the slasher, fell a victim to his temerity in "larking" at a tiger-hunt in India, in which he only lost his head.

Sir John and Lady Biddlecombe live principally at Bath; they made a point of visiting Edinburgh during the period that Charles Dix found a refuge in Holyrood, and have talked of nothing but the "illustrious family" ever since.

The Honourable Augustus Priddie, equally horrified and shocked on hearing from Harry Bibury, in his own peculiar phraseology, that Brummel "had cut his stick, — had made his name Walker," — followed the exiled monarch to Calais. Harry himself got deep upon the turf, and became a

Levanter after the Derby, (having “*let in*” our friend Harry Wright for two hundred pounds,) and for some years figured as the leading “leg” at the Brussels’ races. He was finally run through the body by a French adventurer, in consequence of a dispute at a game of Ecarté. Experience made Harry Wright wise; he gave up betting, by perseverance recovered his losses, and is now “well to do” in a leading hotel at the west end of London. Hampden Stubbs, Esq., M.P. (for at the passing of the Reform Bill his labours in three contested elections were rewarded by a seat,) died on his voyage to Madeira, whither he was proceeding for the recovery of his health, having broken a blood-vessel in an harangue at the Crown and Anchor against the emancipation of the negroes; the public-spirited patriot possessing property at Barbadoes to some extent. Mr. Grindlaw, after twelve years’ labour in the cause of

liberty, was rewarded by his political friends with a post of great honour but little emolument in Sierra Leone, where he speedily fell a victim, partly to the climate, and partly to an asthma brought on by a too energetic eloquence in parish matters.

Lady Cheetham, who, according to Priddie's last, received the sobriquet of the Thames Tunnel, from being unquestionably the greatest *bore* in London, may still be seen occasionally in a pit-box at the opera before Easter; it being, according to the aforesaid jocose authority, the *Lent* season with her and the booksellers. While on the subject of the heroine of water parties, we must not forget the West Smithfield Loan Society — Mr. Julius Pewtress, jun., of Poppin's Court, the worthy deputy's elder son, has "*popped* the question" to his cousin, Miss Matilda Julia Sparling, and been accepted. On the day of their nuptials her uncle, the worthy pawnbroker, "redeemed,"



as he jocosely observed, his numerous *pledges*, by abdicating in their favour.

Of the minor characters we need only give a brief notice. Messieurs Gribble and Cocksedge lived to witness the introduction of that admirable force, the New Police, the value of which even they had the candour and generosity to admit.—(Gribble loquitur); “Them new p’lice are out-and-outers, riglar trumps, as to *perwension*; though as setters (*id est*, persons using the haunts of thieves in order to give information), they are tyros, flats; and, s’help me Bob! for pitching a bit of gammon, for sucking the brains of a flat, or for soaping him down for a split on his pals, they’re not to be compared to the Bow Street ’thorities.”

Mr. Gribble is now governor of a rural penitentiary, where he superintends his peculiar grinding mill, and the picking of oakum and hemp. And Mr. Cocksedge having been

fortunate enough (through the agency of an accomplice who peached) to receive a considerable reward for the recovery of a large quantity of stolen property, has embarked it all in the wine and spirit line, and has become the mighty monarch of a gin palace. So great a predilection has the ex-Bow-street runner for John Bullism, that everything in his establishment, down even to the brandy, is British.

Mr. Beverley Gagen rose considerably by the decline and fall of the British drama, as a jackal to the depraved taste of the lion-hunting public; he became the fortunate possessor of a lion and lioness; and having introduced them at one of the legitimate theatres in the metropolis, in a drama of his own construction, realised a large sum, and subsequently "*starred*" with them in the provinces, with the greatest success and roars of approbation. An unforeseen "animal accident" unfortunately deprived him of his two

children. Mr. and Mrs. Fitz-Annandale's names may still be seen blazoned forth in large red letters in provincial towns

“As *stars* fresh added to the skies.”

Their only son, the infant prodigy, Master Alexis Fitz-Annandale, would doubtless have proved himself “a chip of the old block,” but unfortunately, when attitudinising in a mythological ballet, as Cupid, the wires broke, and the precocious god of love dislocated his ankle; since that period he has descended to that most useful personage, a call boy.

Last not least, Doctor and Mrs. Boyle quitted Boulogne for London soon after the fatal event we have recorded, in consequence of the serious illness of an uncle, just returned from India, who was anxious for his niece's attendance. After a month of suffering Mr. Marsland died, bequeathing a tolerably large fortune to his niece, Mrs. Boyle. The Doctor

was anxious to return to his native town; and, hearing that the Pagoda was for sale, commissioned our old acquaintance Mr. Hood to purchase it. This was speedily accomplished: fortunately the house required considerable repair, and Mrs. Boyle's good taste suggested the removal of the pagoda and aviary; the house was restored to its primitive state, a good substantial town-like residence. The greatest hospitality is kept up at "Marsland," so the property has, in compliment to Mrs. Boyle's relation, been named. The Doctor keeps his wife's and his own birthdays, the anniversaries of his marriage, and of the day he came into the possession of Marsland. "*Bonum vinum lætificat cor hominis*," is his motto; and if on those occasions the worthy M.D. would not in our days have ranked as a disciple of Father Mathew, some allowance may be made, for, according to the Doctor's saying, "It's a poor heart that never rejoices."

At Lord Atherley's death many distant relations came forth as claimants for his estates; the property was thrown into Chancery; the newspapers teemed with reports, as to how a learned counsel opened on one side, and how another replied; and after decree, and reference to the Master, rehearings on further directions and appeals, exceptions, and reversals of decisions, &c., despite the new impetus that has been given to Chancery suits, the Keeper of the Queen's conscience still keeps an *equitable* eye and hand upon the property; nor is it easy to perceive the eventual appropriation of

COMPTON AUDLEY.

THE END.

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